

isle of the MIGHTY™

For Changeling: The Dreaming



isle of the MIGHTY™



by Beth Fischl, Jennifer Hartshorn, Deena McKinney and Wayne Peacock

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From Wayne Peacock

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Contents

Llandona's Saga	4
Book One: England	
Chapter One: Talecraft One – History of England	8
Chapter Two: The Kingdoms of Albion	26
Chapter Three: The People of Albion	54
Book Two: Scotland	
Chapter Four: Talecraft Two – History of Scotland	70
Chapter Five: Caledonia, Land of Hope and Betrayal	84
Chapter Six: Lads and Lasses	114
Book Three: Wales	
Chapter Seven: Talecraft Three – History of Cymru	130
Chapter Eight: Cymru, Land of Song and Companions	144
Chapter Nine: Y Cymri, the People	170
Appendix	185



Llandona's Saga,

OR

A Young Verbena's Primer

Ariana ferch Emyr, known to her friends in the nearby village of Niwbwrch as Ariana Evans, felt troubled. Sitting in her Aunt Gwen's garden after a morning's ride, she pondered the ants crawling over the purple irises. She studied the dust on her long riding skirt and nibbled on a strand of her silvery-blond hair. Ariana saw coils of steam from the noontime ferry, near the horizon. She listened to the lazy summer drone of the bees and inhaled the scents of flowers and sunshine. Ariana did all she could to take her mind away from her troubles, but with no success. As the sun crept across the sky, she sighed and fidgeted. She felt perplexed and uneasy. At the door of her garden cottage, Aunt Gwen watched the distracted girl for a long time. But with a knowing smile, she finally came to join her young apprentice.

"You look troubled, my girl," said the older woman. "Here passes the glorious days of your sixteenth summer, a year of change and promise for this land. Yet you pout like a babe denied a teat! For the toast of the island, you look glum as a toad. What ails you, child?"

Ariana finished plucking petals from the daisy she held in her hands. "Oh Auntie, I simply don't know! I am so confused about Baron von Rader!"

Aunt Gwen stiffened. "Has he not been kind to you? Has he been stingy or rude? Because if he has..."

"Oh, no, Auntie!" Ariana said quickly. "He is incredibly kind. And not a day passes that some gift from him does not arrive in my chambers. Books, flowers, a locket, everything you could imagine. He is certainly trying to court me in a gentlemanly manner, even though I realize such things are mere trappings of propriety."

"And you like him?" continued Aunt Gwen, squinting at the girl. "There is no other who has claimed your heart? We want you to be satisfied, my dear. If there is someone else, a local lad perhaps, such things are not *entirely* untenable. However, von Rader's lineage is noble and powerful. His masters from the Order of Hermes in Freiburg have given us the very highest recommendations, you know. Particularly with Bismarck's impending unification of the German States, he is a man of influence. You would do well not to dismiss him lightly."

Ariana smiled a bit. "Yes, I am very fond of him. The baron is young and dashing. He is sober in countenance, but I can see that passion lurks beneath his studious manner." She blushed. "I cannot deny that I look forward to seeking out such hidden ardor. And no, there is no one else. It's just...well, I simply cannot understand!"

"Understand? What is there to understand?" asked Aunt Gwen, becoming more frustrated with the girl.

Ariana lifted her chin in defiance. "How long has this gone on? With your generation and that of my mother? With my grandmother during the Regency? With my great-grandmother in Georgian times? How long have we Rheibau ferch Llandona been the brood mares of

stuffy old Hermetics? Baron von Rader may be a fine young man, but I do not like being served up as the wild, nubile nymph on his dinner plate! So he has an ancient lineage and is knowledgeable of willworking, why does that make him better than some goatherd from down the Conwy Valley, or even a fisherman on the coast of the Irish Sea?"

"I can see that we have sadly neglected some significant portions of your education," replied Aunt Gwen drily. "When you were stirring dyepots and dosing the animals, a bit of history would not have been amiss. A little less dancing skyklad round the maypole and a little more learning from the old scrolls would have served you well. Ah, youth. We let the young ones run free and unfettered, and so it comes to this. Custom, fate and duty — are these what guide you? No! You think little of the will of the Goddess and more of your own whims. Selfish girl! We who are your family, we who love you and have tended you since you crawled from your mother's womb, would we do wrong to you?"

Tears splashed down Ariana's cheeks at the passion and hurt in her aunt's voice, and the sight of the girl's weeping caused the older woman's mood to soften. "There, there, my dearest. Forgive me, for I am wrongly blaming you for my failures as a teacher. Dry your eyes, and I will tell you a tale you may have heard as a child, but perhaps should hear again with the ears of a woman. Here is the story of Llandona, from whom this coven takes its name, and of the great faerie prince who took her for his own as the campfires of Beltaine burned long ago." Gwen pulled her shawl closer against the breeze.

"Llandona's mother was Blodden, a woman of the Wyck, a respected practitioner of the arts in a village near the Northern Sea. From miles around, everyone ill came to see her, for she had renown as a mighty healer. Here in her cottage by the shore she was working one early spring morn, when she heard shouts of terror from nearby. Blodden saw Roman soldiers encircle the village and then ride toward her home. One centurion came forward, while the others held their ground within easy bowshot. She knew these men held the lives of the villagers in their hands, and that she must give her aid."



"You are Blodden, healer-woman," said the Roman soldier in broken Welsh.

Blodden met his gaze boldly and answered smoothly in his native Latin. "I am she. What do you want with me and the people of this village who have done you no harm?"

"Healer, we have need of you. Our commander was seriously hurt in a skirmish with the blue-painted savages north of here. A week we have traveled by sea, and his wounds fester. Will you come?"

"I would come even if you did not threaten the village," she replied, quickly gathering her herbs and poultices to follow the centurion. He led her to a nearby, hastily constructed camp and escorted her to the commander. Blodden drew back in shock,



not only at the deeply infected wound he bore, but also at his handsome features and the aura of power she felt in his presence. Gently she bathed his hurts and gave him specially prepared wine to ease his pains. He smiled weakly at her and touched her hand.

"My name is Gavin Marius," he whispered. "You have my thanks and my word of honor that no harm will come to any in your lands." Blodden nodded, shaken by sudden stirrings of desire for this Roman.

Under Blodden's gentle care, Gavin Marius healed rapidly. And as she suspected, he himself possessed gifts of magick, blessed or cursed to know the future before its time. As summer turned to fall, the commander and his men stayed in the fair village, Gavin himself becoming the mate of the willing Blodden. Desertion was a serious crime in the Roman army, but so few of Gavin's men remained and so far off course they were blown, no one ever sought them out.

From Gavin and Blodden's union came the child, Llandona. Mother and father trained her in the ways of True Magick, dwelling intently on the patterns of life, emotion, fortune and essence we all share. And as the child bloomed with power, so too did she grow in beauty and wisdom under the light of the Goddess.

As custom demanded for all girls, she led the dancers of Beltaine the spring season after her first broken link with the moon. Her dark glossy tresses flew unbound behind her like a sail as she danced, faster and faster to the wild strains of the music. But as the song ended, and the dancers collapsed into a heap of laughter, silence fell on the festivities. From the edge of the village where sand touched sea came a lone rider, a tall man on an armored white steed. His noble garments flashed scarlet and gold, and from his saddle jangled bells of merriment. The

faerie, for such he was, rode to Llandona's side, dismounted and knelt before her.

"Llandona ferch Gavin, well met! I am Cunedda ap Cythan. From the other world I have ridden on the straight sarn this night to meet you and claim you as my bride. For Lady Don has deemed it so, and by my heart, I do love you well."

"How is this?" asked Llandona, her knees trembling in adoration and fear. "For my eyes never beheld you before this night, yet you say you love me?"

Blodden's words of protest stopped in her throat; the appearance of the faerie folk sometimes boded ill. The Tylwyth Teg often took offense at the slightest of remarks. Thus Blodden feared her daughter's tart tongue would darken the stranger's mood, and a plague of frogs was the last thing the village needed. But Gavin's hand and soft voice restrained her.

"Leave this as it should be," he whispered. "For no ill will comes of this but rather great joy for ages to come." Blodden swallowed her fear and watched as the light of the faerie prince's eyes pierced the heart of her child, and Llandona succumbed to his ardor and passion. That very night, they made oaths of troth and laid in a bower of spring blossoms, lulled to sleep by the breaking of the waves. In the morning, scarlet flowers grew where Llandona's virgin blood soddened the ground.

The many children of Llandona and Cunedda grew up fair and fresh as their parents, but as fate would have it, all were girls; the seed of the faerie lord produced no sons. Cunedda, for his part, delighted in his brood of flower-faced children, and Llandona decreed that only lords of the fae or powerful practitioners of

magick could wed her daughters. This brought suitors from Cymru, Hibernia, Albion and even members of a far away noble house of magi called Merinita. The daughters married and in turn produced their own daughters, so that the tradition of Llandona continued.

As for Llandona herself, no one is certain. After many happy years with her, Cunedda seemed to slowly fade and weaken with a wasting illness. One day, he never returned home from his usual morning ride and was not seen in this world thereafter. Llandona never shed a tear, but it is said her heart broke that day. Her eldest daughter Glenia saw her walking on the ocean shores calling for the will of the Goddess to end her loneliness. A great storm blew up then, scattering the villagers indoors for shelter. When the storm ended, no trace of Llandona remained...yet in the vales near Anglesey her scarlet flowers grow still. And in the cottages of those who call themselves the Rheibau ferch Llandona still flow the blood of love from mighty mages and noble fae.



Aunt Gwen took a deep breath as she finished the tale. "So do you see, dearest girl? Many hundreds of years have passed since the days of Blodden and Gavin, Llandona and Cunedda. Our family has grown, lived, loved, worked and died in these fertile lands. We have created a center of learning and beauty that celebrates the life and wonder of this realm of Cymru. And yet, we have always maintained it as our fate to live out Gavin's prophecy, to fulfill his vision, whatever it may have been. For you see, he never told Blodden nor Llandona precisely what he saw of the future, only that it would be wondrous and full of great joy. And they trusted him, not because he was a man, nor even because he was their blood relative. They had faith in him because they knew Gavin had foresight into the rivers of time and a grasp of the very fibers of destiny. Who were they, mere mortals, to question the will of the Goddess herself who had given such happiness to them all? If Llandona trusted her father when he gave his blessing to her bonding with the faerie prince, and her daughters' union to the fae and powerful willworkers from other lands and places, who are we to do differently? The many years have proven Gavin's prophecy true. But it will only continue if we in the present continue to nurture his vision. Will you, Ariana, not continue this thread? The next draw of color upon the tapestry is yours to make."

For a long while, Ariana sat in silence. She thought of her dead mother and father who perished in the summers of their lives, leaving her to the loving care of her aunt and the others at Llandona Coven. She thought of the empty days since the lords of the Tylwyth Teg had last ridden on the shores of Anglesey and of how she vowed as a child to rediscover the fair folk. She thought of the wisdom and affection she heard in the baron's voice when he spoke of magick and his travels in far-away lands. And finally, a shy smile lit her face.

"Thank you for the tale, Aunt Gwen, and for the listening. You must excuse me now, for I still stink of my morning's ride. It wouldn't do to greet Baron von Rader for dinner looking like a grub. At least not until he becomes more accustomed to seeing me in a dishevelled state." Ariana gave her aunt a kiss and ran to the cottage.

Long after Ariana departed, Gwen blew dandelion clocks and smiled absently at the sun sinking over the distant cliffs. A wayward weft, she mused, only makes fabric stronger when carefully rethreaded into the warp. I am fortunately clever with my shuttle.





CLINT



Book One: England

Chapter One: history of England

*The waies, through which my weary steps I guyde,
In this delightfull land of Faery,
Are so exceeding spacious and wyde,
And sprinckled with such sweet variety,
Of all that pleasant is to eare or eye,
That I nigh ravisht with rare thoughts delight,
My tedious travell doe forget thereby;
And when I gin to feele decay of might,
It strength to me supplies, and chears my dulled spright.*

— Sir Edmund Spenser, “The Faerie Queene”

1997 Talecraft Festival, Imbolc 1997

Park-a-Door Freehold, Coniston Water,
Principality of Tears (Lake District, England)

Day One

— High Lady Ellyndil, Sidhe of the Seelie Court, House Fiona, Welcome and Invocation (extracts)

On this sublime winter day, I take sincere pleasure in welcoming you all — childlings, wilders, grumps and our special guests — to partake of this freehold’s hospitality. Every winter the fair folk of this kingdom hold this festival. Here we spin tales, swap memories, tell more than a few lies and celebrate our heritage in stories and lectures.

This year, for the first time since the nobility returned to Earth, over a quarter-century ago, I have invited several mortals to

join us. They belong to that select and highly respected group, the mages. For those childlings among us, I should explain that these men and women are like the mighty wizards of our most magical stories. But you need not fear. These wizards belong to groups of high-minded folk called Traditions, and they are our friends.

In fact — and here I speak to my fellow nobles and to the leaders of the citizenry — I believe the Tradition mages must become more than friends. They must be our allies. As we fight against encroaching Banality, so must the Traditions try to restore wonder to the world. We fight a common enemy, an enemy you will learn more about at this festival.

In older times, many mages worked with the sidhe. But during the Interregnum our two peoples drifted apart, each busy dealing

with problems of our own. Consequently, we lost much lore of the mages, and some among them forgot us. Yet now we — nobility and commoners alike — begin to renew the acquaintance. Together, I believe we can take the fight to the enemy, restore Britain's might and regain the lost age of glory!

I call upon all the Kithain, even the pooka, to welcome our visitors, to learn from them as I have — and, at last, to call them friends. And to those Awakened who kindly join us for these three days: I bid you welcome, and enjoy.

Sam Haine, Verberna Master

— England Yesterday and Today: The Once and Future Crisis (extracts)

Thank you. I am pleased to be here, though I have to say I feel more than a little queasy, speaking to you on the history of England. You can tell right off from my mid-Atlantic accent that I'm not British, although I did live here for about 80 years of my youth, off and on. My esteemed friend Lady Ellyndil — what's that, child? How old am I? Wouldn't you and a few thousand Technocrats like to know! And my birthplace, and my birth-name, and many more facts that I don't intend to tell you.

As I was saying, the noble and beautiful Lady Ellyndil asked me to talk on a huge subject — the history of your fair country — and to emphasize the doings of you Kithain and the Awakened — that's what we mages call ourselves. Now, if you talk to a vampire or some of the cockier mages, you'll get the idea that some supernatural being was behind almost everything that ever happened throughout history. This is false, and if you hear it, you know you're talking to a liar or a fool. We don't like to think about it, really, but the great movements of history are almost always accidents. If vampires had actually been planning history, they would have done a much smoother job.

Still, there are groups who don't exactly engineer society, but try to guide it. The most successful of these is a large group of mages called the Technocracy. They are responsible for convincing the world that magick can't happen and fairies don't exist. In other words, they want everyone at this festival to *go away*.

The Time of Myth

B.C.

?	Tuatha de Danaan; Time of Legends; the Wyck appear.
6000-5000	Land link between Britain and the continent submerged.
3500	Britain's Neolithic Age: long barrows and stone circles built.
2100-1650	Bronze Age in Britain.
1000	First farmsteads settled in Britain.
500	The Sundering: The Dreaming and the world of mortals ripped asunder; the Iron Age of Man.
500-350	Migration of Celtic people from southern Europe.
150	Gaulish tribes begin to migrate to Britain.
54	Julius Caesar lands in Britain, then withdraws.

Now, I happen to know a lot about the Technocracy, and no, child, don't ask how. Today I'm here to tell you about a new Technocratic faction that's especially dangerous to you folk here in Britain. But first I want to explain where they're coming from, and why. That's why I'm telling you about England's history.

I've invited a fellow Tradition mage to help me. I'd like you to welcome Professor Geoffrey Twidmarch, Hermes bani House Merinita. Professor Twidmarch teaches history at Cambridge, and he has kindly prepared a timeline of major events in the history of Great Britain — mortal, Awakened and fae. Today he'll be helping me with England, and in the next few days he'll help other speakers on the history of Wales and Scotland. How about a nice hand for Professor Twidmarch!

By the way, for the other mages in the audience, and I see three or four, Professor Twidmarch is an Adept with a Hermetic cabal down in Cambridge, but he's recently joined a Verberna coven up north for a one-year apprenticeship, as part of Horizon's new "ambassador program." If you want to know more, talk to me after the lecture.

Are we ready, professor? I understand the good professor had prepared transparencies and an overhead projector, but that seemed a bit too banal for this illustrious festival. So with the professor's permission, I'll just do a bit of...there... Works better than a screen, doesn't it? Thank you, thank you. Professor Twidmarch, the first transparency....

The Time of Myth

Now about the time the Tuatha de Danaan moored their great gilded ships off the emerald isle of Eire, a group of godlike shamans, mages known as the Wyck, arrived in Britain. These healers needed neither food nor sleep, nor did they ever feel the chill shroud of death. The Wyck befriended the British tribes, just as the Tuatha de Danaan did their Gaelic tribes across the gray Irish and Celtic Seas. The Wyck gifted the shamans of their tribes with fire, seeds, wine, the calendar — and, most importantly, the truth. They taught humanity to seek the truth in itself and the wild truths of nature. As a descendant of these very same Wyck, I hope, Earth save me, to continue seeking the truth with you fae.

Years passed, and the Wyck and the Tuatha de Danaan spread throughout Cymru (what you childlings and wilders know as Wales), Scotland and England. As your bards have taught you, the world was at peace with itself then: Wyck, Tuatha de Danaan, shamans and tribes-people all dreamt the same Dream. Beasts now thought of as mythical — the raging griffin, the fire-breathing dragon, the fierce unicorn — roamed freely. Heroes of immense strength, wit, purity and honor populated the Isle of the Mighty. The people built long barrows, stone circles and henges, or temples.

When humanity first gripped cold iron, the great Dream fragmented. Now, understand that humans are a willful lot, despite what other mages may tell you. They took up iron swords and knives and began to dream their own dreams. As they began to make the world safer for themselves, they also shut themselves in, the way you shut a door to keep out a biting wind. They lost their vision of the world outside that door. Gradually, in a process that continues to this day, they lost their ability to see those who lived that Dream with them long ago — you.



Some of the original Wyck survived and, it is said, still live as ancient recluses with incredible power. Their descendants, many of whom remained in Britain because of the powerful magickal energies of the place, became heroes, druids, healers, witches, bards, kings and queens of varying power. These folk did not sit around talking about high magickal goals; they simply existed as mortals in a magickal land. Some were Picts, and battled the Celts. (The Celts, by the way, did not refer to themselves by that name; they referred to themselves by the names of their tribes.) Others were Celts who eventually conquered their Pictish cousins, locking many deep within the Earth where, it is said, some still remain — powerful, insane and royally carked.

The Roman Occupation

So the fighting and the lovemaking — apologies, Mother Boggan — continued this way for years, with more people thrown into the pot. For instance, tribes of Gauls joined the Celts and Picts as they fled from Roman-occupied lands. Then in A.D. 43, the Roman Emperor Claudius invaded Britain, opening up the Isle for other conquests. Until then, few mages and shamans had taken up arms against each other except in petty dispute, generally preferring quiet, solitary lives over conquest and rule.

This was not so for the Romans. They fought war after war, against wild enemies, natives strong with a warlike instinct — among them: Boadicea, Queen of the Iceni, with a martial spirit as stalwart as any of you redcaps; then the Welsh and Scottish tribes, and later the Bretons, British and Gaels. The old Roman historian Tacitus observed one welcoming party: “On the shore,”

he said, “stood the dense array of armed warriors, while between the ranks dashed women, in black attire like Furies, with hair disheveled, waving brands. All around, the druids, poured forth dreadful imprecations that scared our soldiers.”

Some Wyck lived with the tribes in ancient Britain, and of those, some chose to be druids, although not all druids were Wyck. With this smattering of Wyck amongst their armies, the tribes of Bretons mounted an admirable defense against the organized might of the Roman infantry. Probably by way of damage control, Tacitus failed to mention the role the Wyck played. During battles, maniples of Roman infantry retreated with severe burns as their clothes suddenly burst into flame and spears splintered as they pierced Roman bodies. Roman soldiers fell ill with cramps and strange diseases the night before a battle.

The Roman Occupation

A.D.

- 61 Boadicea rebels against Romans, but is defeated.
- 120 Roman Emperor Hadrian builds wall on Scottish border.
- 306 Roman troops in York declare Constantine emperor.
- 320 Sacred Congregation members and Sons of Mitras (early Celestial Choristers) filter into Britain; develop mixed feelings about pagan shamans' ways.
- 350-69 Border raids by Scots and Picts.



So the Romans were still putting down revolts almost a century after they first invaded Britain, faced with the unexpected fierceness and tenacity of an enemy defending its home turf. Gaels and Picts conducted border raids until the Roman Emperor Hadrian, fed up with their insolence, used the might of Rome to build a 73-mile wall along the length of the Scottish border to keep out the Gaels. He posted over 18,500 foot soldiers and cavalry, housed in 17 forts, along Hadrian's Wall. I leave the saga of the Gaelic fight to later speakers, but on the Bretonic side of the wall, things became intolerable. Soldiers kept pouring into England until finally even the sage mages there tired and grew reclusive. It was time for some new blood.

The Spread of Christianity

- | | |
|-----------|--|
| 400-1300s | Proto-Celestial Choristers (church mages of various sects) filter into England. |
| 400-500s | Dream Realm of Camelot emerges. |
| 405 | Church and pagan mages start rivalry over local paradigms. |
| 407 | Pagan mages forced to withdraw as prophetic mages win over Sleepers to their paradigm. Christianity spreads via mortal missionaries. |
| 410 | Romans withdraw from Britain. |
| 440-495 | Angles, Saxons, Jutes invade and settle in Essex, Sussex and East Anglia. |

The Spread of Christianity

I spoke earlier of the Traditions. One of the earliest in the Isles, aside from the Verbenas (who sprang from the Wyck), consisted of church mages who would become a Tradition called the Celestial Chorus. In 320, still during the Roman era, many mortal missionaries, including a few Sacred Congregation members and Sons of Mitrás (early Celestial Choristers) crossed the channel. The earthy ways of the pagans appalled some, while others were fascinated by the potency and beauty of the shamanistic ceremonies. As they came to know the Bretons, their influence spread, and 80 years later these church sects began to establish cloisters and churches throughout the land, led by both Sleepers and mages.

As some prophetic mages established churches across the Isles, their relations with the pagan mages soured. Rivalries over places of power developed; prophets built churches atop ancient pagan henges and barrows; shamans smashed stone crosses carved by the hands of the church mages.

Mages weren't the only ones affected. Though most prophets tried to tolerate diverse beliefs, a sad few sought to silence all discord. You fae suffered. You often located your mounds and trods in places of great beauty and magical power, or perhaps they became such after you set up there. From the prophets' view, these sites were perfect for erecting churches to honor their God, sometimes called the One. Fae and mages skirmished over these locales, and rumors spread amongst mages that you were demonic. Some church mages sought to expel you from your homes, some to kill you.

Verbena and other shamans tried to negotiate with these magickal prophets, for the sake of their friendships with the fae, and sometimes it worked. When it didn't, magus warred with magus, often in individual competitions. Fae sometimes became involved, although you typically first sent out tricksters, like you pooka — that's right — to escalate the inconvenience of living where mages shouldn't.

By 407, the church mages resurrected the third-century Chi Rho symbol (an early Christian symbol, originally pagan, and an abbreviation of the Greek word *chreeston*, meaning “auspicious” or “of good omen”) and made it one of the many prominent symbols of the One's power. It started popping up everywhere, annoying shamans, pagans and fae. By the end of that year, relations soured so that many pagan mages were forced to withdraw from the populated areas of England. The prophets convinced so many Bretons and Gauls that their views represented Truth-with-a-capital-T that shamans found it difficult to practice their magick before unbelievers. Pagan mages and their few followers retreated into the tough upland hillsides and northern fells near Carlisle, the bleak moors of Dartmoor, the caves and coves of Yorkshire, and the wild marshlands of East Anglia. They forged individual alliances with the native fae, and lived there in peace.

As the church grew in strength and gradually lost its initial tolerance for diverse beliefs, the schism between the mage factions grew more bitter. Though not all prophetic mages supported the church, the majority did. Of them, only the minority became polemic enough to stir up feuds. I should note that the Traditions weren't known as such yet, but it is easier to refer to them by the names we know today. In the “civilized” areas of England and Ireland, the proto-Celestial Chorus held the upper hand, while the Verbena remained strong in the wilderness; the Order of Hermes simply hunkered down wherever they pleased, hermetics integrating themselves into the local towns and cities.

Early Ecstatic mages — mages who believed (and still believe) in attaining enlightenment by pushing sensation to its very limits — established a presence in Britain during the Roman occupation. Drawn by the faeries and the land's wild magickal energies, they formed a handful of sensual sects, some of which survive to this day as the Fellowship of Pan (established in the 1500s), the Achame (in the mid-1700s), and the Kiss of Astarte (in the 1960s). Others joined the Verbena or founded the Seers of Chronos in the 1400s.

So England was gradually becoming a mix, not only of native fae, but of mages from the future Traditions, and of Picts, Gaels, Gauls, Bretons, Romans and other peoples. Strife was everywhere, as cultures and beliefs collided. At the same time, England was becoming dynamic, its magickal energies pooling, the seed of great deeds germinating.

In 410, the Romans up and left. Their capital, Rome, had been sacked by the Visigoths, and they needed all their soldiers at home. The Bretons' initial celebrations gave way to regret as the Angles, Saxons and Jutes heard of the end of the dreaded Roman occupation and decided they wanted England for themselves. In 440, they invaded and settled in Essex, Sussex and East Anglia.

So more people threw themselves into the mix, with more strife, more beliefs, more energy. And around this time, a great dream began to arise.

Camelot — How many images does it conjure, how many dreams? And the pursuit of some of them turn into wet — uh, turn into fantasies for some, nightmares for others. More about that later.

Sometime during the 400s or 500s, the Dream Realm called Camelot began to take shape. “Dream Realm” is a term mages use to indicate an otherworld shaped by people's unconscious hopes and dreams. So much energy had coalesced around the events of the past 350 to 400 years — the invasions, the newness of the other cultures — that the British people began to search for political and cultural stability, unity... Utopia. People began to dream of Camelot.

I suggest you go to Tom John's presentation on Wales (or Cymru) for more on Camelot, because Wales is where it all began. For now, keep in mind that some people's search for Utopia doesn't always lead to bliss.

War for the Black Torc

Before the Saxons set up their seven kingdoms across Britain, you fae ruled many of the mortal lands. Human tribes worshipped the sidhe as mysterious gods and even treated commoner fae like minor deities. This immense respect was lost after the entrenchment of the church. The mighty Oberon dates to this time, though he is an eternal spirit whose life and fate intertwines with the Dreaming in ways none of us may ever know. Many of the most powerful fae artifacts, including the Black Torc and some of the Treasures of Britain, date from this time, as well. Some artifacts exist that are even older and immeasurably powerful — dating from the Time of Legends. But that's a story unto itself, and they're all lost or carefully hidden now.

It's said that an ancient ghille dhu, perhaps *the* Green Man, guards a cave filled with fae treasures, somewhere in the North Country. But woe unto him who tries to gain them for himself. This guardian, as old as the Earth itself, gains power from the progression of time and the seasons. He is as strong as a mountain, and is more cunning than the eldest sidhe lord. He does not die and get reborn as the rest of the ghille dhu, but is their lord, the soil from which they spring. He is mysterious and secretive, but when he appears, he is like the crack of thunder and the rending of earth — and no one who has seen him has emerged unchanged. That's neither here nor there, though, for no one has seen him for centuries. With many of his followers, he has retreated into The Vale — something like a huge, majestic freehold to the ghille dhu — and (I hear) mourns the loss of the primeval forests across Great Britain.

War for the Black Torc

- 527 War of the Black Torc: Seelie vs. Unseelie throughout Wales and England over the magickal Black Torc. Unseelie Prince Carniog leads Saxons against the Seelie. Morgan le Fay betrays Caerna's son, Prince of Glamorgan, who is entrapped in the Black Torc, and then rules Glamorgan with her Unseelie court.
- 556 Saxons set up seven kingdoms across Britain.
- 558-663 Quests to find the Black Torc and release the Prince of Glamorgan fail.



In any case, after the establishment of the Saxons' seven kingdoms, fae power slowly faded, imperceptibly, until the nadir of the Shattering. But at the same time you began to organize yourselves into something of a united kingdom, not united in the sense of Wales and Scotland under English rule; but the little sidhe-controlled fiefdoms throughout these areas grew into larger kingdoms ruled by high kings and high queens, something you have sorely lacked in the recent past. You involve yourselves less in mortal affairs these days, as some mortals turned against you, but your internal affairs were much more tightly knit then.

At that time, Caerna, direct descendant of the Tuatha de Danaan, was crowned High Queen of the Principalities of Glamorgan and parts of Dyfed in Wales and of the Kingdom of Wool in England, what you now know as the Kingdom of Smoke, in the Midlands.

Now, even before the Sundering, Seelie and Unseelie principles differed drastically, like fire differs from ice. Even as the Seelie established kingdoms throughout Britain, the Unseelie did likewise — dark kingdoms of primeval black oak, misty moors that played with trespassers' notion of time, craggy ravines lit by a night sky full of jagged lightning.

For centuries, the item of great power called the Black Torc circulated amongst the Unseelie kings. It is said that in the right hands, the Torc could steal souls, enchant fae and cause armies of humans to sleep until a high king sounded the Horn of Brân during a full moon.

During the Roman occupation, the Black Torc disappeared, but in 527 it showed up at the bottom of the Albion Pool in Wells. You childlings should know that this pool is one of three ancient, magickal pools in Wales, Scotland and England. Each has special powers, and it is said that he who controls all three is granted great power over all of Britain. We know that the Albion Pool in England resides in Wells, near the sacred spring of St. Andrew's Well, but excavation for a new pipeline to service a nearby mall threatens to destroy it. Brianne, the pool in Wales, remains hidden, and the Tuath Glas Cu, "dear green place" — in a hidden corner of a crypt beneath Stirling Castle in Scotland — is dried up.

Immediately after the Black Torc resurfaced, Seelie and Unseelie kingdoms went to war. The Torc was in the possession of the Unseelie Prince Carniog. About the time that the War of the Black Torc began, Myrddin, High King of Gwynedd in Wales — we know him today as "Merlin," but opinion varies as to whether or not he's King Arthur's Merlin — disappeared, and High Queen Caerna assumed his place as queen of the Gwynedd fae.

While Seelie and Unseelie battled primarily in Wales, some fighting spilled over into England, especially within the Kingdom of Wool, Queen Caerna's domain. Carniog enchanted many Seelie, causing them to forever serve him in his court. Among these fae was Caerna's son, the prince of Glamorgan, who was betrayed by the Unseelie Morgan le Fay — yes, *that* Morgan le Fay!

In the final battle, Caerna knocked the Black Torc from Carniog's hand. It fell into the Llyn Brianne in the Cambrian Mountains, turning the waters black for days, and neither Seelie nor Unseelie could retrieve it.

Finally, Caerna retreated, heartsick at the loss of her son. For more than a century, she sent her courtiers out to search the lake, the rivers, even the Bristol Channel for the Torc that might release

her son. They searched England's Midlands, poked around Kent, even went as far north as Aberdeen, but no luck. Caerna languished.

Age of the Mages

England's Age of Mages began building up steam in the 700s, as the Celestial prophets founded Glastonbury Abbey (later associated with the Isle of Avalon, the last resting place of King Arthur and the Holy Grail).

The great mage Bonisagus officially founded the Houses of Hermes in 767 and began to establish Covenants — the mage equivalent of your freeholds — across England. The Houses attracted mages seeking solitude and esoteric knowledge not available on the continent. Many proto-Verbena joined the Hermetic Houses of Díedne, Bjornaer, Merinita and Ex Miscellanea. Many other peasant mages remained aloof from the Order, and often battled with its members as the Dark Ages wore on.

House Díedne and the Kingdom of Heather established the first fae-mages treaty in Britain in 922. But many other houses, which were prone to politics then as the Order is today, saw Díedne as a threat. In 1012, rival houses pursued individual Díedne mages throughout England and the far reaches of Wales and Scotland. Most were killed, but some, including its leaders, escaped. It's said that the fae of the Kingdom of Heather ushered them out of harm's way, perhaps even to Arcadia, via trods. It's also said that the leaders of House Díedne bide their time there, awaiting a perfect moment for revenge on the Hermetics. Don't gulp so loudly, Professor Twidmarch — Díedne had nothing against Merinita. Twidmarch's House helped defend House Díedne during the extermination, but to no avail.

Age of the Mages

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| 700s | Proto-Celestial Chorus founds Glastonbury Abbey (later associated with Avalon). |
| 730-821 | King Offa builds a dike along Mercia-Wales border. Mercia strong at this time. |
| 767 | Houses (later Order) of Hermes founded by Bonisagus; covenants established across the islands. |
| 793 | First Viking raids. |
| 816 | 13th House of the Order of Hermes, Ex Miscellanea, established. |
| 878 | King Alfred defeats Vikings, but allows them to settle eastern England. |
| 879+ | Germanic proto-Verbena, early Hermetics settle in the islands throughout the Dark Ages. In the missionary period of the Dark Ages, both Hermetics and Celestials become far more prevalent, and establish strongholds throughout the lower islands. |
| 922 | First treaty established between Díedne mages of the Order of Hermes and the fae Kingdom of Heather over land use in northern England. |
| 954 | Battle of Carnjog's Doom. Fae Queen Caerna rules Glamorgan, Dyfed, and the Kingdom of Wool. |
| 1012 | Hermetic houses declare open war on House Díedne of the Order of Hermes. Individuals are pursued and destroyed throughout Britain; House disbanded. |



Twm Sion Cati will be telling you of the Battle of Carniog's Doom in his speech on Wales, so I'll not belabor it. The upshot is that the battle left Carniog dead, Caerna ruling the united Welsh principalities as high queen, and the fae of the Kingdom of Wool feeling increasingly forgotten as Caerna focused her attentions on Wales. This feeling grew ever worse as the decades wore on....

The Glastonbury Compact

Almost a century after the death of her son, High Queen Caerna, the Ageless One, began to ail. After she proclaimed her interest in leaving for Arcadia, her courtiers in the Kingdom of Wool and in Powys, which she now also owned, began to jockey for the throne. Worse, European mages — particularly the church prophets — were overrunning the places of magick in England, forcing more and more fae to withdraw from the Kingdom of Wool. By 1075, almost a decade after the Battle of Hastings, small skirmishes between mages (and not just the Celestials) and fae began to arise. Chances looked grim for further concords between us.

Thus, the Glastonbury Compact of 1102 was more a matter of good fortune than rational intent. Glastonbury Abbey had been built upon the Arch of Dióŵy, sacred to certain Breton tribes before the Roman invasion. It is said that the pagan blood spilt over the Celestials' Glastonbury Abbey salted the earth so that no flowers, except for a cutting from the Black Rose of Moronwy, would grow there. Rumors spread that monks had buried a chalice filled with the ancient pagan blood of the Wyck beneath the abbey. These rumors were probably later bastardized into the legend that the Holy Grail resided there.

Rumors are not always harmless. Legend tells us that a nascent covenant of undead sorcerers called the Tremere heard of the chalice in the late-11th century, and vowed to possess the area for its associations with blood magick. The vampiric sorcerers arrived during the frigid winter of 1101, and monks at the abbey slowly began to die. Months passed, and townspeople were found bloodless on deserted paths at the edge of town.

Church prophets sought out nearby covens of Verbena and individual fae for help in eradicating these sorcerers. These groups signed the Glastonbury Compact, a truce that, in exchange for fae assistance, forbade mages from stealing fae land. Using Seelie spies, the proto-Celestials located the sorcerers' havens and destroyed the last of them in 1105. Soon after, mages and fae fell back into their old patterns of distrust, although they never violated the compact.

As a side note for those of you who study the history of mages (for those of you who don't, this won't make a bit of sense), note that before the mid-1100s, there were no Craftsmasons; until 1325, there was no Order of Reason. Before 1458, there were no Traditions as such. Of the organized mages from foreign lands — the groups that became the Akashic Brotherhood, Ahli-Batin, Euthanatos and Dreamspeakers — most representatives didn't come near Great Britain for centuries. The proto-Solificati emerged in England during the 1200s; the original Sons of Ether (the Electrodine Engineers) formed in Paris in 1866, although lone magickal tinkers had worked in England since the late Renaissance. The Virtual Adepts, of course, would not appear until the late 1800s, as the Difference Engineers. The early Hollow

The Glastonbury Compact

- 1024 Fae Queen Caerna falls ill and her court disintegrates.
- 1042 Anglo-Saxon Edward the Confessor crowned king.
- 1066 Battle of Hastings. William of Normandy crowned king. Welsh battle for independence (giving rise to numerous castles, many owned by mages and noble fae).
- 1071 Hereward the Wake, Anglo-Saxon resistance leader, defeated at Ely.
- 1075 Mages and fae increasingly vie for places of power (Nodes).
- 1086 All England subdued under Norman rule.
- 1093 Robert FitzHamon, knight of William the Conqueror, given land in Cardiff. Builds Norman fort.
- 1102 Glastonbury Compact signed: Church and Celtic mages ally with Kingdom of Mist in heroic effort to oust undead sorcerers who seek Glastonbury for its associations with blood magick.
- 1154 Henry II demolishes castles, levies taxes against barons in exchange for military service.
- 1170 Henry II's knights murder Thomas à Becket, Arch bishop of Canterbury.
- 1177 Queen Eleanor poisons Fair Rosamund, Henry II's mistress. The *Rosa Mundi* is a rose variety in Gardens of the Rose (Chiswell Green, Hertfordshire) named after Rosamund.
- 1193-94 King Richard "the Lionheart" imprisoned in Germany; Prince John tries to take throne; in Nottinghamshire, Robert of Locksley ("Robin Hood") and his Merry Men work to protect Richard's claim.
- 1215 Barons compel King John to sign the Magna Carta. The Loss at Grimsfen Tor: Under Caerna, fae fight mages who seek Nodes; both sides in turn defeated by emerging scientific mages.

Ones actually grew out of the Romantic Era of the late 1700s to early 1800s, and their kind were quite popular (underground, of course) in England during the Victorian years.

Back to 1215. At this time, Hermetics, particularly of House Quaesitor, sought new Nodes for their rapidly growing English membership. These mages had never signed the Glastonbury Compact, which shows you how mages of that time (and even today) almost never worked as one.

One of these Nodes, a particularly powerful and ancient faerie mound at Grimsfen Tor in the Midlands, caught the Hermetics' eyes. They moved to take it, but it was successfully defended by the Seelie under High Queen Caerna. Now, centuries of political infighting had weakened the Seelie courts throughout the Kingdom of Wool and Caerna's Welsh kingdoms. Caerna could not rouse a timely defense and took heavy losses. Despite deep misgivings, she appealed to an Unseelie court at Nottingham that owed her favors, and its warriors arrived just when Caerna thought all was

lost. Together they managed to fend off the Hermetics, but at dusk of that glorious day, both camps — fae and mages alike — were devastated by the unexpected arrival of a group of scientific mages — the forerunners of the Technocracy. With cannons and explosions, they took Grimsfen Tor and routed the defenders.

The loss of the strategically located Grimsfen Tor shattered Caerna's hold on the Kingdom of Wool. Many court sidhe, knowing this, immediately left the battlesite for Arcadia — and Caerna simply disappeared.

The Shattering

Great changes for both mages and fae came in the late 1200s and 1300s, which we all still endure. We willworkers know that reality is subjective — that if enough people believe the world works a certain way, then it does. The Order of Reason, founded in 1325, dedicated itself to spreading the doctrines of scientific learning. These doctrines forbade the existence of magick, and slowly, over the next three or four centuries, magick became harder to create.

Now, did this “change of paradigm” cause the Shattering? Professor Twidmarch's timeline might have it so, but I personally am not willing to crawl out on that particular limb. We do agree that the Black Death made terrible depredations among both mages, who died, and the fae, who fled to Arcadia.

The Shattering

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| 1230s | Great wizard and scholar Roger Bacon (later of the Order of Hermes) flourishes. |
| 1256 | First Parliament that includes ordinary citizens. |
| 1282 | Edward I conquers Wales. |
| 1296 | William Wallace begins war for Scottish independence, defeating Edward I when he invades Scotland. Edward I seizes Stone of Destiny from Scone and takes it to Westminster Abbey. |
| 1297 | William Wallace defeats English at Stirling Bridge. |
| 1314 | Scots, led by Robert the Bruce, defeat English at the Battle of Bannockburn. |
| 1325+ | Convention of the White Tower and rise of the Order of Reason. Persecution of non-Convention mages begins. |
| 1348 | The Shattering; the Black Death; noble fae and others flee to Arcadia, while others undergo The Changeling Way. Gates to Arcadia close. Paradigm begins to change. |
| 1349-1969 | Interregnum. Commoner fae learn to rule themselves, become wanderers, appear as freaks and madmen to humans. |
| 1352+ | The Alliance: Seelie and Unseelie cease hostilities. |
| 1415 | English victory over France at Agincourt. |
| 1424 | King Albion rules changeling court in Kingdom of Roses. Border wars between Kingdom of Wool (Midlands, later Kingdom of Smoke) and the Scottish fae's Kingdom of Three Hills. |



My own group, the Verbena, is most skilled of all the Traditions in the magick of Life. This skill lets us resist the plagues better than some other groups. I suspect this is one reason we Verbena today are somewhat better informed than other Traditions about the fae. Those of us wise in your ways survived to pass along the lore to descendants, whereas other Traditions had fewer survivors from that time. That's my guess, at any rate.

In the early 1400s, the army of England's Henry V scored a tremendous victory over the French at Agincourt, where France, which outnumbered Henry's forces six to one, lost 10,000 men against a few hundred English losses. This marked a rise in England's power in Europe. In happier times the fae kingdoms would have grown correspondingly strong. But in the first century of the Interregnum, the kingdoms were weak. The Alliance put to rest the long struggle between Seelie and Unseelie courts — yet even so, the kingdoms found plenty to squabble over.

The Kingdom of Smoke, for you childlings, occupies the Midlands of England, just south of this kingdom. Before the Industrial Revolution of the last century, this was the Kingdom of Wool; in 1424 there were more sheep there than people, and far more people than fae. King Albion was a nocker commoner who had seized the empty throne through nerve and a certain low cunning. He had designs on all England, and Scotland too. Albion provoked war across his northern border with the Kingdom of Three Hills — I believe the pretext was Queen Mope's failure to invite Albion to a private tea party — and there followed three decades of pointless border wars.

At last, Albion sent forth a small band of loyal followers to enter enemy territory and circulate an unusual offer. Albion promised a large fortune in Dross to any Kithain who would bring him a single strand of Queen Mope's red hair. After a month, one disgruntled sluagh in Mope's court brought Albion a long strand of hair, which the sluagh had stolen from the brush in the royal boudoir. King Albion rubbed his hands in satisfaction, paid the reward, called in certain minor Crafters he knew among the humans, and set to work.

With spells and Glamour, the king spun the hair to the length of Hadrian's Wall, or so the story goes. Then he and a team of weavers wove it into the form of a griffin, and by powerful cantrips he brought the creature to life as a chimera. "Pursue

Queen Mope!" he commanded it. Woven as it was from Mope's own hair, the griffin knew at once Queen Mope's whereabouts, and it immediately flew forth to chase her. The creature found her in her palace, roused her from it in a panic, and chased her across the moors. Some say it is still chasing her.

King Albion offered the bereft Kingdom of Three Hills a truce on terms very favorable to himself. This marked his rise to power — though the power to be had among the fae in those dark times was vanishingly small.

Wyndgarde's March

The Wyndgarde episode is remarkable not only for the ferocity of battle on both sides, but because — so far as I can tell — it marked one of the few episodes of cooperation between mages and fae until modern times.

Christopher Wyndgarde of the True Cross was a frothing fanatic who despised every "supernatural" person, creature, place or occurrence on Earth. Despite his furious fanaticism, or perhaps because of it, he achieved tremendous magickal power. With it, and with an undeniable personal charisma, he had risen to high influence in the Order of Reason. Some accounts have it that Wyndgarde had previously been a mystic within the more tolerant church faction that later became the Celestial Chorus. If you ask me, I'd say the tolerance levels of the Order of Reason and the Choristers were not widely different at that time, and maybe not real wide today. But the point is probably moot.

The long period of mayhem we now describe as Wyndgarde's March began on Midsummer Night, 1435, when General Wyndgarde led an attack on a Verbena blood rite in the wilderness outside Harrogate in North Yorkshire. Several Craftmason mages and a squad of Templars, the Order's foot soldiers, moved in without warning with flintlocks and fireballs. They killed every living being there, save for the coven leader, Nightshade.

Nightshade would later become the greatest witch of our Tradition's long history, easily capable of stopping any number of lesser mages in their tracks. But at this time she had not yet achieved such power, and she barely escaped the assault. What's more, she was gravely wounded, and she spent the next several months healing in a Highland cavern. Meanwhile, Wyndgarde escalated his crusade.

The March destroyed most magickal records of that time, but we do know that Wyndgarde killed many mages and fae in the first days after the Harrogate attack. He leveled covenants, farms, Nodes, freeholds, villages and hermits' caves — and their occupants. The March took him across England and into Wales, while many of his "holy" troops swept across western and parts of eastern Europe. From Wales, Wyndgarde set sail across the Irish Sea at Holyhead and landed in Dublin a week later, fighting inclement weather conjured by the faerie sea folk of Caernarfon.

Prepared for the onslaught of Wyndgarde's troops, many of the mages and changelings of Ireland were waiting outside Dublin in the hills near Newry. Nightshade had recovered by this time, and had been busily constructing what would later be called The Council of Nine. The year 1442, however, was a year for settling old scores. Nightshade arrived in the village a few hours before Wyndgarde and his troops.

Wyndgarde's March

- 1435-1441 The infamous Order of Reason Crusader General Christopher Wyndgarde of the True Cross leaves swath of destruction during so-called "Wyndgarde's March."
- 1442-1452 Verbena Master Nightshade destroys Wyndgarde in battle. "Decade of the Hunt" begins. Individual groups of fae and mages hunt down Wyndgarde's allies who escaped from final battle of Wyndgarde's March.
- 1453 End of Hundred Years' War against France. England's Seelie and Unseelie courts are fractured and weak. Sidhe are gone.

As the holy crusaders marched through the hills on their way to Belfast, a faerie army and a company of mages and their “grog,” or soldiers and servants, ambushed them from all sides. It was a glorious sight: troll steel slicing crusaders’ flesh, shamans’ fire searing soldiers, redcap teeth flashing in the sun. Nockers and even humble boggans stood atop the hills working catapults. Pooka mooched soldiers’ shoes and small pieces of their armor. Still, we were outnumbered and outmatched, and the tide of battle turned against us. Wyndgarde’s mages felled many of our own that night with their searing white fire.

Seeing this, the tired Nightshade fortified our troops with warmth and dark-sight, then called a magical blizzard down upon Wyndgarde’s troops. Nightshade’s company and the fae retreated further into the hills where they were fed hot meals and given comfortable beds by several friendly motleys of boggans who lived nearby.

In the meantime, the blizzard confounded Wyndgarde’s men. Most of the army froze to death. Wyndgarde tried to warm them, but his magick gave away his location to Nightshade; she attacked in surprise and slew him in single combat. Of the few soldiers who staggered away and found shelter, some later set up monasteries, churches and farms. Others returned with reports to the rest of Wyndgarde’s army in Britain and Europe.

The following day, the so-called “Decade of the Hunt” began, a bloodthirsty hunt of retribution ensuring that Wyndgarde’s men were wiped from the face of the Earth. Mages and fae throughout Great Britain and Ireland participated; a single report of a survivor in their area could set motleys and covenants hunting for days. By 1452, most British mages and Kithain were satisfied that they had obliterated Wyndgarde’s legacy. Those who weren’t probably continue hunting to this day.

The Grand Convocation

I must admit a certain admiration for King Albion. He was only a middling ruler, at least as High Lady Ellyndil explains it to me. But Albion had a definite genius for staying in power by keeping three jumps ahead of all opposition. He managed by manipulation, subtly encouraging rivals to undermine one another rather than his own power. That’s a tricky business, but Albion and his line did it for most of five centuries.

The story I like to tell — probably you fair folk have heard this a dozen times, but it’s my lecture, so I’m telling it again — concerns what I call the Celebrated Jumping Boggan of Sussex County.

King Albion had made it known that a courtier who sought his favor must undertake a task or competition. I believe Albion himself selected these tasks for maximum mischief, but he always claimed that his ministers determined them — which, of course, was a fine way to set the courtiers against the ministers, and the ministers against one another. Senior managers at major corporations use the same tactics today.

One day, two rival boggans in Albion’s court asked the king to resolve a dispute concerning ownership of an Everfolding Box. Both held influence over powerful factions at court. The king wanted to look good to both leaders, but wanted neither to

The Grand Convocation

- 1457-66 Grand Convocation in Horizon Realm. Nine Traditions named and codified.
- 1500s Fellowship of Pan (Cult of Ecstasy) established in private club outside London.
- 1513 English defeat Scots at Flodden.
- 1514 Fae High King Albion defeats Prince Paridell of Three Hills at the Battle of Cheviot. Boundaries of English Kingdoms of Heather and Tears established. Kingdom of Heather bestowed on Princess Molly, Kingdom of Tears on Baedin Orthwell. Era of political backbiting in fae courts begins.
- 1535 Wales unites with English crown.
- 1544 Kingdom of Mist established, given to Donwegan.
- 1545 The Twilight Time: political infighting among English fae kingdoms for High King Albion’s favor.

have the Treasure. He commanded the two boggans to engage in a jumping contest at noon the next day. Whoever could jump higher, the king said, would earn the box. You can understand the atmosphere and customs that prevailed at court when you hear that both boggans took this command perfectly seriously.

One boggan, Cedric Longelbow, was an honest fellow — at least, as courtiers go — and had fine athletic ability. He expected to win, if the contest went fairly. But Cedric knew that his rival, Devin Twelvelfinger, was an Unseelie rascal, and at times a scoundrel. Devin had no jumping ability to speak of, so Cedric expected that Devin would try trickery.

The night before the contest, Cedric stayed up guarding his good leather boots, for fear that Devin would put an enchantment upon them and weigh Cedric down. Cedric also got all his boggan friends and relations to watch Devin’s quarters closely. They listened for spells and sensed for Glamour. Nothing. The supposed rogue Devin sat alone in his chambers, read scrolls, went to bed and slept soundly.

What Cedric and the other boggans didn’t realize was that the alleged “Devin” was an impostor: one of Devin’s cronies, enchanted to look like Devin. Meanwhile, the real Devin was out at the tournament ground, casting a Glamour on the soil.

The next day at noon, Cedric was exhausted, yet still confident that he could beat any un-Glamoured jump Devin could make. All the court gathered to watch, and the high king entered with trumpets sounding and pennons flapping. He signaled for the contest to begin, and Cedric leaped high up in the air. Rather, he tried to leap — but the enchanted ground attracted him like a magnet. He hit the dirt like a meteor and broke both legs.

Meanwhile, Devin prepared his own leap, for which he had carefully rendered himself immune to his own Glamour. But when he jumped, Devin was astonished to discover that some unknown third agent had been at work with still another enchantment. When Devin jumped, he rose high, high in the air, so high he was lost in the clouds. People heard his screams of panic, but whether he ever came down, no one ever discovered. For all I know, he may be ready to fall any day now.

Even in his agony, Cedric tried to claim the box. But King Albion decreed that because both contestants had evidently used Glamour, the contest was void, and he himself claimed the box. Cedric and Devin's two factions immediately accused one another of duplicity, and the feud weakened both sides for a decade to come. Even then most people believed, as we believe today, that King Albion himself must have cast the Glamour that surprised Devin, and a brave few dared to raise the possibility then. To respond to the accusations, Albion tried and imprisoned a few hapless pooka whom he always kept around his court for just such occasions. That, too, is a technique you'll see among major corporate managers today.

The Renaissance

Elizabeth I, just about the most politically savvy ruler England ever had, ascended to the throne in 1558. If her other name, the "Faerie Queen," didn't describe her appearance — which, believe me, it didn't, unless she was a redcap — begging your pardon, Sir Bloodtooth — it certainly described her uncanny ability to enchant her courtiers and her adroitness when politicking with her rivals.

At about the same time Elizabeth was crowned, King Albion of the faerie court decided to divvy up the Kingdom of Roses. At that time, the kingdom stretched north from London to Oxbridge and south to the coast near Southampton. Now, Lady Ellyndil tells me that chimera didn't exist before Banality began to invade in earnest during the 16th century. In 1550, chimera had just begun to plague British changelings, sea monsters being among the most common (individual, custom-made chimera were to arrive much later). One particular monster, a sea serpent with glistening blue scales and a forked tongue, that was dubbed Scaletongue, was

The Renaissance

- 1558 Elizabeth I crowned.
- 1564-1616 Shakespeare.
- 1560 Fiefdom of Ivory's boundaries established; stewardship of fiefdom bestowed on the eshu Lord Benin.

making quite a nuisance of itself off the coast of Southampton. It routinely capsized changeling fishing nobbies and delighted in chasing and crushing royal caravels. Albion's subjects began to complain, and Albion himself became irritated at the prospect of curtailing his sailing trips on pleasant days.

Moreover, foreign fae, many with Unseelie tendencies, had been landing in England of late. With many responsibilities and intrigues to track, Lord Albion came to the conclusion that elevating a courtier to lordship with the duty of watching the coast would be an efficient way of handling the problem.

Other reasons moved the king to divide the Kingdom of Roses. He was tiring of politicking at "South Court," as the court in Southampton was known, for the courtiers there were boors and the politics itself wasn't much of a challenge.

Thus, in 1560, King Albion established a new territory over which he presided as high king: the Fiefdom of Ivory, so named after its rolling downs of chalk. The cleverest of the courtiers living there at the time was the eshu Benin, a talented storyteller, excellent at politicking, and a wise decision maker. Albion raised Benin to lord and commanded him to monitor the coast. This pleased Benin, for it allowed him to travel along the coast as much as he liked.





The sea serpent problem, by the way, didn't abate until the late 1700s, despite hunting parties, but the serpents themselves moved further offshore with each passing year.

Settling of the New World

Britain was starting to feel crowded. Perhaps you fae were already feeling it, as the Twilight Time fell upon you, and your courts descended into an era of political backbiting and betrayal. Mages were just starting to feel it. Hermetics, Verbena and the Fellowship of Pan (of the Cult of Ecstasy) all vied for Nodes as the Order of Reason slowly pulled them from the Traditions' grasp.

Years earlier, the proto-Tradition mages had donated their own Nodes to the Traditions as a whole in order to create a magickal Realm called Horizon. Now, with the increasing shortage of Nodes, mages across Britain regretted their decision. Political battles erupted in Horizon over who was to safeguard huge Nodes such as Stonehenge, Chalice Hill and Glastonbury Tor. More often than not, the Hermetics won out.

One unsolved mystery regards a Node in New Forest, the primeval oak forest in Hampshire which was the favorite hunting grounds of the Norman kings. Called the Pool of Kings, the

Node consisted of a small pool of black water that reflected the night sky and its fiery stars even during the day. It is said that a king or queen who gazed into the pool would see the reflected stars form the profiles of would-be assassins and the moon form the profiles of future lovers. It is also said that the pool turned crystal clear in the presence of a noble ruler.

The Verbena who guarded the Node, a cabal known as the Fidfios, or "Wood Sages," risked death if the king's men caught them, for only royal hunting parties were allowed into the forest. A thorny barrier grew around the Pool of Kings that prevented all but the smallest and most persistent from reaching it. The oaks near the pool thought and walked, shifting forest paths to easily redirect mundane travelers away from the Node. With these protective measures, the Verbena caretakers felt comfortable leaving the Node alone in order to patrol New Forest. One day, when the Fidfios mages returned, the Node was gone. It was simply not there. The oaks were ordinary trees, the thorny barrier had vanished, and where the pool had been — just an untrampled clearing.

Needless to say, the Fidfios and half a dozen other Verbena cabals throughout England investigated. They turned up nothing but a small silver ring bearing the word "Luna."

The Rise of the Order of Reason

Like a shadow at dusk, the Order of Reason strengthened and spread. Despite its growing potency, it was not immune to schism. A nasty split between the Craftmasons and the other Conventions had begun in St. George's Hill in 1649, when a socialistic commune dubbed, "the Diggers" incurred the wrath of the local landowners. The Craftmasons, already estranged by the Order of Reason's turn away from its original socialistic intentions, supported the Diggers.

Settling of the New World

- 1620 Pilgrims sail to New England.
- 1623 Order of Hermes, Verbena and Fellowship of Pan vie for possession of Nodes, especially those earlier dedicated to Horizon. The Pool of Kings disappears mysteriously.
- 1624 Peace tribunal in Horizon Realm. Some English mages attend.

The Rise of the Order of Reason

1642	English Civil War.
1649	Schism between Craftsmasons and other Conventions begins.
1653-8	Cromwell rules as Lord Protector.
1660	Monarchy reestablished under Charles II.
1665-6	Great Plague/Great Fire of London.
1670	Order of Reason destroys the Craftsmasons after 30 years of support for "the Diggers."
1688	Scots rally to the Stuarts during the Glorious Revolution. William of Orange crowned king.
1707	Act of Union between Scotland/England.
1721	First Prime Minister.
Mid-1700s	The Acharne (Cult of Ecstasy) established.
1756	Seven Years War.
1776	American Declaration of Independence.
1803	First steam locomotive, <i>New Castle</i> , built by British inventor Richard Trevithick.
1805	British defeat Napoleon at Battle of Trafalgar.
1807	Abolition of British slave trade.
1832	Male property owners allowed to vote.
1833	Factory Act: Children cannot be employed more than 48 hours per week.
1834	Tolpuddle Martyrs sent to Australia for forming union. Later, minor "criminals" sent to Australia, among them a few trolls who later establish a freehold in Perth and mingle with Aboriginal Dreamspeakers.

The rest of the Order supported the landowners and the Crown. The showdown ended badly, and the Craftsmasons fell away from the Order. By 1670, a full-blown purge wiped the group from the Earth.

A century and a half later came the Tolpuddle Martyrs. The treatment of these unionists opened the way for more "criminal" exiles, among them the so-called, "Tolpuddle Trolls." The trolls weren't involved in the original union incident, but soon adopted the name because it so nearly coincided with the date of the Martyrs' exile. Sent to Australia, the Tolpuddle Trolls set up a freehold and settled into their new lives there.

A group of Aboriginal shamans sensed a disturbance in the Dreaming, and their investigation led them to the freehold, which the troll Kithain had built on one of the Aborigines' Nodes. After a brief argument over territory, both sides, being peaceful by inclination, agreed to sit down and talk. One shaman began playing a didgeridoo, and apparently one of the trolls was a Scots highlander and had somehow fashioned a bagpipe. They began a good-natured competition — just thinking about the sounds of that concert sends shivers up my spine — and before long, trolls and Dreamspeakers had become fast friends. They still share that Node.

That Australian episode made little impact on history — but the Perth encounter between trolls and Dreamspeakers, though

unremarkable in itself, set the tone for peaceful contact between fae and mages — an example I hope we here, in this freehold, can follow in the years to come!

The Reign of Victoria

Ah, yes. Victoria. Was she a mage? Yes and no. Did she use Technocratic Sphere magick? Well, no. She did, however, alter the world's paradigm through sheer force of personality, and that makes you a mage of some degree whether or not you call what you do "magick." Victoria took Britain's growing international influence in hand to polish a creaking Order of Reason into the modern Technocracy — in the name of Britannia, of course. Many of her advisors and underlings (I can't name names and posts, but we can assume a lot) were dedicated Technocrats, but it's important to realize *they* did not manipulate *her*, *she* manipulated *them* — to say nothing of her hold on the heads of state across Europe.

Now, you can probably guess that Victoria's era was a pretty banal time, what with pollution, overcrowding and vice. To the extent that these weakened the English industrial machine, Her Majesty pressed for occasional reforms, but she remained blind to the greater danger.

By the late 1800s, the old Inner Circle realized that the existing Order of Reason was obsolete, unstable and inefficient. Enter Victoria and her advisors. In 1885, through her force of will, Victoria established a "Grand Cabinet of World Government" which, in 1900, became the Inner Circle of the newborn Technocratic Union. To avoid causing waves and alerting enemies, the news was circulated slowly and with plenty of misinformation to keep spies off guard.

The late 1800s and early 1900s were unstable times for the Technocrats: The Traditions were surging out of centuries of inertia. The common folk had grown leery of industry, and many had turned to spiritualism, communism and religious fanaticism. Slums had spread, resources diminished, and crime, protests and disease increased. Some, within the Inner Circle, felt the Fallen Ones were behind this disintegration, and they were half right. The Nephandi *were* there in the slums of Spitalfields and Whitechapel, though they hadn't caused the mess. Something had to be done, and reorganization under a tighter, more ruthless leadership seemed to be a good start.

Was ruthless leadership a good move? As you can see, it was and it wasn't. When Victoria died in 1901, the Inner Circle took control; it dropped her reforms, and industry surged forward. The Sons of Ether quickly defected, leaving Iteration X and the Difference Engineers in control of mechanical innovation. The death of Victoria and the resulting escalation into World War I seemed like an opportunity, but it turned into a nightmare on the battlefields of Europe. Many Technocrats questioned the war machines' morality, much to Iteration X's collective annoyance — if you'd asked them, they'd have told you that no one appreciates good workmanship any more!

You fae never had any question about the First World War. I gather that everyone among the Kithain decided pretty early on to retreat from the world into your freeholds or your seemings. If the Traditions, let alone the Technocracy, had only kept in better touch with you over the centuries, we would have noted

The Reign of Victoria

1837	Victoria crowned Queen of Great Britain at 18 years old; the Cabal of Pure Thought disbands its foot soldiers (the Templars), replacing them with rifle and cannon brigades (and occasionally stranger things) courtesy of the Artificers, who take up where the Craftsmen left off in 1649.
1854-56	Britain beats Russia in Crimean War.
1863	London Underground opened.
1868	Benjamin Disraeli becomes prime minister, then again from 1874-1880.
1868-74	William Gladstone becomes prime minister, then again from 1880-1885.
1870	Hermetics pull strings in government to pass Education Act, making school compulsory for children up to age 11.
1877	Queen Victoria becomes Empress of India.
1880s	Rows of cheap houses built to accommodate industrial workers; disease and discontent spread; Newcastle, Spitalfields, Manchester and Whitechapel slums become notorious for their awful conditions.
1884	Telephones are introduced.
1885	Establishment of the Grand Cabinet of World Government.
1890s	Era of Sleepers spiritualism begins, helping Traditions nudge the paradigm further in their favor.
1899-1902	Britain wins Boer War.
1900	The Order of Reason is reborn as the Technocratic Union. Inner Circle established.
1901	Queen Victoria dies; Inner Circle takes control.
1905	Sons of Ether defect from Technocracy to join the Traditions.
1914-18	World War I. Fae retreat until war's end.

your retreat as an ominous sign, and perhaps we might have moved more quickly to develop anti-war sentiment on both sides of that idiotic turf war.

World War II

The Sleepers say that Great Britain's stand against the Nazi evil was its finest hour. The war was very nearly the finest hour of the Technocracy as well, the point where the leadership seemed almost ready to recognize that its own policies had brought Europe and Asia to ruin, and to repent. But that fine impulse died as the A-bombs exploded over Hiroshima and Nagasaki.

Of course, by 1945 the Technocrats already had nuclear weapons under wraps for a generation. Whether to let them out — to make the atom bomb part of consensual reality — must have marked a tremendous ideological split within the Inner Circle. I can only speculate about what went on behind the scenes, but obviously the American faction finally did the deed on its own.

World War II

1920	The Great Depression begins.
1924	First Labour government.
1936	First scheduled TV begins.
1939-45	World War II. Traditions briefly ally with Technocracy to eliminate Nephandic threat. Fae retreat to freeholds.
1946	Fae return from retreat. Alliance between Traditions and Technocracy dissolved and disavowed.
1950s	Technocratic power base shifts from England to United States and (1960-80) Japan and Germany.
1956	Suez Crisis: Nasser nationalizes canal, catalyzing invasion by Great Britain, Israel and France.

This marked the rise of the North American Technocracy, and the accompanying decline of the British faction.

After nuclear weapons entered consensus reality, the Technocracy decided that if it tolerated the Tradition mages, then we mystics would inevitably develop the Bomb. To a Technocrat, this sounded like giving a flamethrower to — well, let's say to one of those pooka there, throwing spitballs in the back row. Imagine that!

As for the fae, World War II marked another worldwide escape into freeholds or into mundane seemings. Oh yes, we can scare up a few stray reports of redcaps hitting remote military outposts and munching on grenades, that sort of thing. But even we foolish mortals can see that there aren't many environments less suitable for the fair folk than world wars.

Britain's Technocratic leadership rallied before and during World War II, but fell into disfavor after the war ended. The balance of power within the Technocracy shifted away from England and off to the United States, Japan and reborn Germany. Few British Technocrats understand why, but they don't like the irony that their old enemies and colonies have replaced them at the top.

The War of Ivy

The fair Lady Ellyndil tells me that the War of Ivy over here never descended to the sometimes brutal level it reached overseas during the Accordance War in the Summer Lands. I don't doubt her. The fair folk founded their kingdoms here, before spreading across the world; the rulers of this Isle of the Mighty have a deep kinship with this land and its people. In America, the commoners wanted to overthrow the nobility; here in England, I take it, you citizens just wanted, within the existing system, the rights due any decent, thinking beings. That said, I believe our friends in Scotland and Wales had differing views, but I'm not the one to talk about those.

At any rate, I don't need to describe the war's outcome in detail, here among so many of its campaigners. I will say that wherever the deposed King Albion has wandered, in his exile, he must know that he brought his sad fate upon himself. Furthermore, I have always found Lady Ellyndil a charming host, and in the same

The War of Ivy

- 1960s Kiss of Astarte (Cult of Ecstasy) established in Britain. "Swinging London" era: Beatles, Rolling Stones, miniskirts, etc.
- 1965 Death penalty abolished in Britain.
- 1969 The Resurgence: humans walk on Moon; lost trods, pathways, freeholds restored. Noble fae return to Earth, renew contacts with some mages.
- 1970-73 The War of Ivy: fae nobles vs. commoners. Result: Through resources and power, English sidhe predominate in England and Wales.

way, the people of this kingdom have always welcomed me politely and pleasantly; I am glad that, in my view, both parties have won.

The Settling

I suppose that with all the other chaos going on nowadays, it's only likely that House Diedne might decide to pop back into reality. I've tried to track down the rumors of their sightings, with not much success. Maybe it's an urban legend — or in this case a rural legend, because all the sightings of these supposed Diedne mages took place deep in British or European forests.

Each rumor says that one or more men and women wearing bizarre robes appeared, "as if by magic," somewhere in the New Forest just north of Bournemouth on the Channel coast...or in the Black Forest of northern Germany...or near a stand of oak trees in Brittany, which has hardly any woods left to speak of. These mysterious people gestured broadly, spoke some Latin words, and suddenly the wind blew, or a storm rose, or the grass caught on fire. These wizards caught the observer and shouted in Latin or Middle English or some incomprehensible tongue. Maybe they were asking questions, or maybe shouting curses.

After this, none of the rumors agree. One says the wizards went flying into the sky, another that they seemed to become frightened by some invisible something and vanished. Another says one old wizard, a gray-bearded man with many tattoos, transformed into a youth in a brown leather bomber jacket, conjured a small motorbike and rode off. But then, it was a pooka who told me that last one.

Now, I know quite a lot about quite a lot of things, but the inner secrets of the Order of Hermes aren't among them. So I can't say if these descriptions mean anything. Professor Twidmarch did admit that some details of the wizards' robes matched the colors and symbols of House Diedne. If these are old Hermetics

The Settling

- 1973+ High King David rules the fae from fortress Tara-Nar (North America); Britain joins the European Community.
- 1975 Oil drilling begins in North Sea.
- 1984 Year-long miner's strike fails, reveals decline in union power.
- 1989 Rumored return of House Diedne leaders.

from times past, I expect they'll have several axes to grind with the Order, or on the necks of the first Order mages they meet.

But then again, times have changed rather drastically since Diedne was around. Seems to me that these wizards, however powerful they are, are likely to come into trouble before long. If so, I hope that whomever they meet has the sense to call off hostilities, if possible, and move these people to a safe place.

The Modern Era

I think the future is bright for cooperation between the Traditions and the fair folk. I know I personally feel gladdened to see you all — and I'm not a glad person for the most part, as most of my acquaintances will tell you. You make me feel young again!

But I have to play the old grump now, because I promised at the start of my talk that I'd be telling you some bad news about the Technocracy. I recently took on a disguise and fell in with a Technocrat, as is my practice when I want to know what the enemy is doing. This time I picked a harmless-looking lady in a Construct of the New World Order in the center of London. She looked like nothing more than a secretary, but I discovered more from her than from any three Men in Black. Specifically, I found out about the Harbingers of Avalon.

To understand the Harbingers, we must first realize that when one strips away the magic spells and views the ideals of Arthur's Britain in historical perspective, it's possible to see Camelot as a Technocratic dream. Think about it: one benevolent dictatorship, under a magnificent and powerful king and a council of knights, dedicated to well-being and prosperity under law. Kill the dragons, obey the rules, and the kingdom will prosper. And that, dear fair folk, is what the British Technocrats have been working to achieve.

There is, and has been for centuries, an English secret society within the Technocracy itself. Those within the cabal call themselves the Harbingers of Avalon, or more commonly, the Round Table. Many codes refer to the group as "the Sword in the Stone," a reference to the draw that will mark the true rulers of Britain. It has existed since the reign of Charles II to prevent another English civil war, and has been largely successful. Queen Victoria's father and grandfather belonged to the Harbingers, and she believed it her destiny to draw the figurative Excalibur from the stone. She was wrong, of course, and died before she could make her final move.

Two world wars and the defections of the Sons of Ether and Virtual Adepts have tarnished the Harbingers' plans, and they're not happy. The cabal's own secrecy and old-fashioned nature have left it reeling in the wake of the Atomic, Space and Information Ages. Although this group contains some of England's most influential Technocrats and operatives, Britannia is not what it used to be.

In many ways, this is a gentlemen's club; I'm told that its secret offices are tastefully furnished in the most elegant drawing-room fashion, and its social rituals abound with secret handshakes, code words and formalities. Only 10 men and two women belong to the group, and not many others even knew that



The Modern Era

- 1994 Channel Tunnel opens.
- 1995 Verbena Adept Diana Beals (Fresh Wind Covenant, Horizon) works with other mages and some fae to transform East Midlands from coal mines to national forest and preserves Lancashire and Lake Region from industrialization.

it exists — until right now. These mortals would never consider themselves mages. What they do have is class, money, influence and vision...and a small but potent group of operatives called Zero Division. Unlike the Technocracy's HIT Marks and other vulgar types, these agents have finesse in spades. You rarely ever know when one is around, and it leaves very few traces behind.

With Britannia in ruins, the Harbingers of Avalon have decided to act. Zero Division is in the field. It's not at all what the Traditions usually expect from the Technocracy, but it's old-school English to the core. As the Harbingers see it, the next four years are critical to re-establishing British influence across the world. Anything that will help them is fair game.

Unfortunately, after that woman told me all this, she got away. Her group now knows that I know. I'm telling all of you about all of this, so that if anything happens to me, you'll have a good idea who did it.

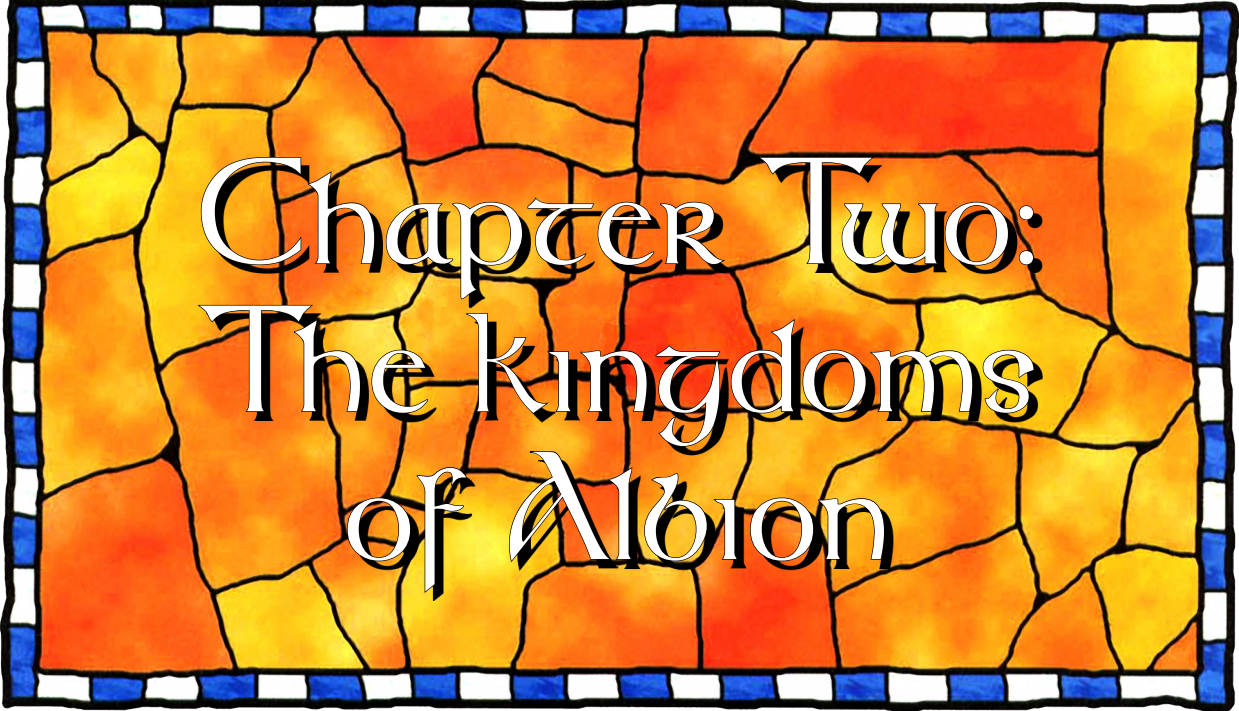
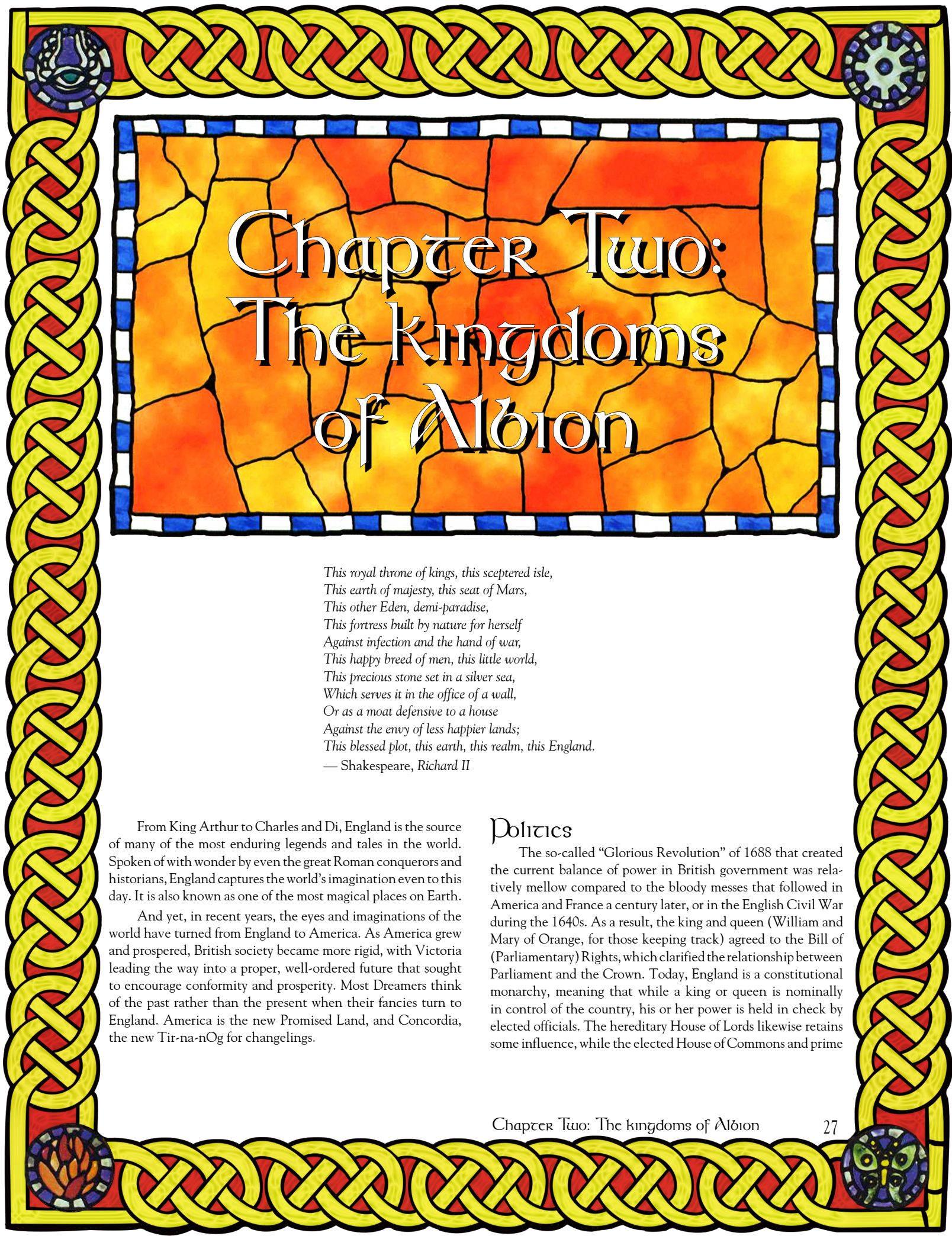
That would be a sad note, and maybe a bad note, to end this talk. So instead, I'll close with my own view of the Arthurian ideal: a peaceful state dedicated to the ideals of honor, courtesy, dignity and a clear sense of the sacred.

In America, we have hardly any sense left of the sacred. Sleepers think "sacred" means the same as "religion," and in America "religion" means either some oily televangelist swindler or a fanatical Political Action Committee with a long hit list of people it hates. But I don't have to tell you fair folk: The sense of the sacred is not about worship, but about an engagement of the spirit with the world. It is about wonder. I believe that you people in Great Britain, mortal and fae alike, have kept some sense of that wonder.

The Traditions stand with you Kithain in the effort to recapture the wonder of life. With our two kinds in alliance, we can re-create a Camelot that would bring pride and gladness to our hearts. I hope you fair folk will learn more about mages, and let us learn more about you, so that together we can remake the world.



Art by
Gaelle



Chapter Two: The kingdoms of Albion

*This royal throne of kings, this sceptered isle,
This earth of majesty, this seat of Mars,
This other Eden, demi-paradise,
This fortress built by nature for herself
Against infection and the hand of war,
This happy breed of men, this little world,
This precious stone set in a silver sea,
Which serves it in the office of a wall,
Or as a moat defensive to a house
Against the envy of less happier lands;
This blessed plot, this earth, this realm, this England.
— Shakespeare, Richard II*

From King Arthur to Charles and Di, England is the source of many of the most enduring legends and tales in the world. Spoken of with wonder by even the great Roman conquerors and historians, England captures the world's imagination even to this day. It is also known as one of the most magical places on Earth.

And yet, in recent years, the eyes and imaginations of the world have turned from England to America. As America grew and prospered, British society became more rigid, with Victoria leading the way into a proper, well-ordered future that sought to encourage conformity and prosperity. Most Dreamers think of the past rather than the present when their fancies turn to England. America is the new Promised Land, and Concordia, the new Tir-na-nOg for changelings.

Politics

The so-called "Glorious Revolution" of 1688 that created the current balance of power in British government was relatively mellow compared to the bloody messes that followed in America and France a century later, or in the English Civil War during the 1640s. As a result, the king and queen (William and Mary of Orange, for those keeping track) agreed to the Bill of (Parliamentary) Rights, which clarified the relationship between Parliament and the Crown. Today, England is a constitutional monarchy, meaning that while a king or queen is nominally in control of the country, his or her power is held in check by elected officials. The hereditary House of Lords likewise retains some influence, while the elected House of Commons and prime

minister control the majority of the legislative and executive power. Together, the Houses of Lords and Commons make up the Parliament. The two leading parties are the Tories and the Labor Party, but the Green Party is making strides in Britain as well as in other countries.

Strikes are not as common today as they were a decade ago, but they still happen. Train strikes effectively paralyze those who depend on public transportation. In a country where petrol (a.k.a. gasoline) is relatively expensive (compared to in the U.S.), this means just about everyone.

Weather

Everyone seems to have heard about the rain and fog in England, and while these conditions are certainly prevalent, other weather shows itself from time to time as well. The South Coast is known for its sunny beaches, some of which even boast of good surfing. Temperatures obviously vary depending on where you are, but London's average temperatures range from 39° F (2° C) in winter to 72° F (22° C) at the height of summer, give or take a few degrees. Bearing that in mind, don't be surprised to see the occasional blizzard in the North Country at midwinter, or to bake in Brighton during the August bank holiday.

The Media

Both television and radio are largely controlled by the government, though in recent years independent stations (such as SKY) have entered the race. The BBC (British Broadcasting Corporation) receives funds from the annual "telly tax" that every British television owner pays in exchange for commercial-free programming.

In print media, *The London Times*, *The Sun* (perhaps best known for "page-three girls" — pinups of buxom young things like Samantha Fox), *The Independent*, *The Financial Times* and *Manchester Guardian* vie for readers with daily newspapers covering a wide range of interests. Magazines on every topic abound, from gaming to gardening. Travelers and natives alike depend on local weekly entertainment guides such as London's *Time Out* for information on concerts, theatre, films and happenings.

British Telecom (BT) is the UK's answer to Ma Bell, and pre-paid phone cards are available at virtually every corner store and tobacconist. BT is also one of the leaders in new telecommunications development, and may boast the first widely available "vid phones."

Travel

Getting to England is relatively simple. The major airports are Gatwick (south of London), Heathrow (west of London), Stansted (northeast of London), London City Airport (southeast of London), and Manchester Airport (near central Manchester). Since the opening of the Chunnel, trains zip back and forth between London and Paris several times each day (though in the World of Darkness, frequent terrorist attacks keep the Chunnel closed for weeks on end). For those willing to take more time, ferries cross the Channel from Scandinavia, France and Holland at Newcastle-upon-Tyne, Hull, Felixstowe, Harwich, Sheerness,

The Kingdoms of Albion

It never ceases to amaze me how very territorial you lot are...almost as bad as the wolves, in your own way. Always the need to divide up and name and put into a hierarchy. Is that really the road to dreams?

— Dr. Gregory Wildham

Though some Kithain who know the old tales still refer to the whole of England as the Kingdom of Albion, each year fewer childlings are taught the story of the high king whose reign lasted over 500 years. The Kingdom of Albion is divided into five separate kingdoms: The Kingdom of Roses, The Kingdom of Chalk, The Kingdom of Mist, The Kingdom of Smoke (formerly Wool) and the Kingdom of Heather. The sidhe rule once more in many of the kingdoms, and though the War of Ivy (known as the Accordance War in Concordia) was relatively bloodless in Albion, resentment still burns in the hearts of both commoners and high fae.

At the present time, the five kingdoms of Albion are in turmoil. Once united under a single banner, the kingdoms now stand divided. Each pursues its own interests with little care for what the others do. Relations with other kingdoms throughout Albion, Caledonia and Cymru are cordial or strained, depending on who you speak with.

Though the changelings of England are not politically united, some common ties do bind them. The Changing Breeds who call Britain their home are tolerated due to a common concern for the environment and a shared reverence for the past. Ghosts are commonly regarded as capricious in a creepy sort of way, and are therefore given a wide berth. Vampires are generally viewed with suspicion, and though most changelings know little of Kindred internal politics, the name Tremere puts fear into childlings and grumps alike with remembered tales of Meerlinda's betrayal and bizarre experiments behind locked iron gates. Cordial relations have characterized most dealings between mages and changelings, and all childlings are taught of the good deeds mages performed on behalf of the fae and their changeling kin.

In the past century, England's dreams have begun to fade. With the collapse of the British Empire, the decline of the monarchy and the rise of socialism, England's identity has been permanently changed. Fae blood no longer courses through the royal line, and the modern English paradigm of an unfailingly polite, well-ordered society maintaining the status quo has stifled many a dreamer.

Most changelings traveling to England will find the locals willing to answer questions and help out wherever necessary. Certainly, typical "ugly Americans" will find the reception chilly whether Kithain or not, but on the whole most changelings are eager to share the old tales with newcomers in exchange for stories of travels. Many British changelings resent the airs that Concordian nobles have taken on of late by usurping the ancient traditions and claiming Concordia as the new Land of Dreams. But most will give American commoners the benefit of the doubt, for the English understand all too well the chasm between the needs and wishes of the people and the actions of their leaders.

Magick in England

The Traditions are caught in an outdated paradigm, always looking toward some quaint mythic past. Certainly, the Adepts and the Sons of Ether are better off than many of their brethren, but they too believe in a fairy tale world, while in truth a dozen disparate paradigms at odds with one another threaten to tear the world apart. But no matter... through our influence, the world is changing, leaving behind childish fantasies. Let the myths of the past stay buried. We will lead England into the 21st century and beyond.

—Elizabeth Croft, Harbinger of Avalon

Magick has been the lifeblood of Britain since before the dawn of history. Before the founding of the Traditions, the Wyck were the first to practice magickal crafts in the world, and Britain is believed to have been one of its strongholds. With the coming of Christianity, the new faith clashed with the old, and in many cases the two combined into something that was neither one nor the other. Medieval alchemists researched names and properties in an attempt to define and control the universe.

The Verbena, Order of Hermes and Celestial Chorus were among the first Traditions to establish themselves in England. The Order of Reason maintained a presence in the Isles as well, and with the reign of Victoria the Technocracy became an integral part of the English political machine (see Chapter One: History).

Today, most mages in England go about their business without concern for supernatural political games. The Technocracy has so successfully faded into the background that many Tradition mages are completely unaware of the influence it holds over much of the country. The few Nephandi and Marauders who make their homes in England do so only so long as they escape the notice of the Harbingers of Avalon.

This “live and let live” attitude extends to most other supernatural beings as well. Vampires, werewolves, ghosts, mummies and others are left alone by most English mages, so long as they don’t cause problems. Perhaps this adherence to the status quo is the most telling sign of the Technocracy’s influence....

Dover, Ramsgate, Folkestone, Newhaven, Bournemouth, Weymouth, Portsmouth and Plymouth.

An extensive system of trains and busses keeps England well-served by public transportation; a good thing, when you consider the astronomical prices BP (British Petroleum) charges for petrol. Hitching is still relatively common, but as crime increases fewer people take the risk. Those wanting to hike or bicycle through England are well-advised to get a waterproofed backpack.

The Kingdom of Roses

I’ve seen a great many lands in my travels, but none can compare to the Kingdom of Roses. Few places can inspire the heart and the mind as it can. But despite (or perhaps because of?) this, the Roselands are torn by the quiet ravages of the War of Ivy, as commoners and sidhe alike are polarized along lines of class and kith. Few other kingdoms are as aware of the old traditions and rituals, but in most cases these only serve to reinforce the tendency to look toward the past, rather than the future. More than a few changelings here have Unseelie tendencies of which even they are unaware, but such is common when change is slow in coming. But who knows? The old ways may well see them through, and from what I’ve seen, Whitestone is the man to do it.

—Gerard, eshu troubadour

The Kingdom of Roses encompasses London and extends into areas commonly known as East Anglia, the Home Counties, and part of the so-called “Heart of England.” Though the Roselands have over time become the most populous kingdom in the Isle for both mortals and changelings, this was not always the case.

Long before the War of the Roses, the fae who called the Thames Valley and the surrounding countryside their home claimed the rose as their symbol. Its dual nature, as both the most beautiful and refined of flowers combined with its needle-sharp

thorns, conveyed the nature of the fae nobility. For a while, their beauty surpassed that of mortals, their strength was likewise formidable. The elf-shot that felled so many who trifled with the affairs of the Rose Court was a closely guarded secret, and some say that when the renowned nocker weaponsmith Wayland Smith perished, he took the secret of these magic arrowheads with him.

It is said that the ancient Court of Roses held in the days before the Shattering was the center of fae power in the British Isles, though many from Glastonia in the Kingdom of Mist would dispute this. Those Kithain historians who claim that the Kingdom of Wool (now called the Kingdom of Smoke) once held the most

Trods

Though legends speak of ancient fae who, when the stars were right, were able to open trods between any two places in the world, most English trods fell into disuse after the Shattering. Generations of changelings lived and died with only a scant few passing the knowledge of the trods down. Those who knew the secret pathways guarded them jealously. But since the Return, trods long-since forgotten have reappeared. Although some remain secret, more of the Old Roads are being traveled once more.

Many trods follow the “old straight tracks” or ley lines, but others connect the most ancient freeholds to one another. Though they were once used to help distant freeholds stay in touch with one another, some fear that they could be used to invade other kingdoms. Although none of the kingdoms of Albion seem likely to do so at present, some fear that outside forces (such as Ross of Caledonia) could use the Old Roads to stage swift and deadly attacks.

power are shouted down by younger voices; for how could an area as bleak as the Midlands ever have surpassed the glory of Londinium?

Today, the Kingdom of Roses is a study in contrasts. The old and new meld together on the streets of London, a city with one foot in the future and another in the distant past. While the Technocracy holds a small majority of loyalty among mages, this atmosphere has done little to deter the changeling population. In London and the surrounding area, the development of new technologies still holds limitless wonder, and the rigidity of the “Old Boys Network” exists alongside an exuberant, youthful subculture.

After centuries of rule by King Albion, a commoner, the sidhe returned some three decades ago to reclaim what they felt was rightfully theirs. In fact, so many sidhe attempted to declare themselves the sole rightful heir to the kingdom, that to this day, they have not resolved the issue. Since the mid-70s the Kingdom of Roses has been ruled by Lord Edgar Whitestone, a troll who bears the title Lord Chancellor. The sidhe of the kingdom who hold noble title gather periodically as His Lordship’s Privy Council, and together they advise Lord Edgar on matters. Privately, of course, nearly every individual on the Privy Council is trying to stage a coup to declare himself king, but on the surface the system appears to work quite smoothly, with amicable relations all around.

London

*There’s a hole in the world like a great black pit
And its morals aren’t worth what a pig could spit
And the vermin of the world inhabit it
And it goes by the name of London*

— Stephen Sondheim, *There’s No Place Like London*

London is often the first and last place visitors see in Britain, due to its position as both the capital and the transportation hub of the island. In spite of a large amount of international traffic, London has retained its own identity. Its history serves as an anchor while the whirlwind of trade, culture and politics spins around it.

But like any metropolis, London has its share of crime and squalor. In the World of Darkness, these problems are multiplied fivefold by the influences of supernatural beings who use mortals as their pawns. The threat of terrorism from the IRA and certain Middle Eastern groups is constantly on people’s minds, and riots — of rugby players, students or political protesters — are increasingly common. As the ghosts of centuries past look down on a city in decline, the fog creeps in from the Thames at night, shrouding the city and deepening each shadow.

The Monarchy and the Fae

I don’t know if the break can be mended, so far have the rulers strayed from their compact with the land. Oh, they’ve always had their sordid little affairs and scandals, but in times past they still remembered their responsibility to the land they ruled over. No more. We have our agents working on the young ones, to be sure, and those who are guiding the education of young Will and Harry claim that in them, there may be some hope. We can but pray for all our sakes, that the young may remember what their elders have forgotten.

— Edgar Whitestone, Lord Chancellor

For untold centuries, the monarchy, the land and the fae have been intertwined in a tapestry of fate. Although there is no longer a blood tie between the crown and the fae (or their changeling descendants) who likewise live to protect the land and its people, rituals are still observed, even today, to maintain their connection.

Yet with each passing generation, a little is forgotten. The power of the monarchy was curtailed long ago, but in modern times the blood of the fae has grown so thin that they can wield no Glamour. Career politicians have taken center stage, and most know little of the Old Ways which guarded England and kept her safe for so long. With every passing year, more and more concern is directed toward the economy, foreign policy and abstract social reform, with little regard for the land or the actual people who are affected by the policies.

The mortal monarchy is in ruins, its deeds the stuff of modern penny dreadfuls and tabloids. The leaders who have risen to take their place have done so without ceremony, without ritual, and neither know nor care about the importance of the Old Ways. The age-old leaders of changelings, the sidhe, have returned, but they fare little better than their mortal cousins. Like the politicians, they seem to have little understanding of the real needs of their subjects. The nobles seem unwilling or unable to lead their people, and the commoners scramble to promote their own agendas. The sharp chill of Banality has settled hard on many areas, and others wonder how much longer they will last. The oldest scholars fear that Winter is nearly upon us; still others claim that we have been in the grip of Winter for a long time, and that Spring is surely just around the corner.

The land is divided. The traditions that bound the people to the land and the land to its leaders are forgotten, and no new leader has come forth to unite the Isle of the Mighty. Some insist that no single leader can represent the widely varying interests of the people; perhaps in a simpler age this was possible, they contend, but no longer. But others remember the old tales, and whisper that when the land is united once more under a single high king, Spring will come again to the land and its people.

Whatever the truth, the time has come for action. Without a leader, the kingdoms will continue to drift further from each other and from the land, and some fear that freeholds or entire kingdoms may lose their connection to the land entirely. Will they rejoin the Dreaming, become dream realms of their own, or disappear entirely? Only time will tell...time, and the dreams of those who inhabit the land.

Staying Out of Trouble

Possession and use of guns and explosives are the quickest way to find trouble, if that's what you're looking for. Fortunately, outlandish dress will only keep you out of the most toffee-nosed places, and most Londoners are too polite to stare. Keep your private bits covered and you should be OK. Loud persons may attract attention more here than in colonial cities, depending on which section of town you're in and whether or not they think you're a rugby fan.

Visitors will have little difficulty puzzling out the public transport system, chiefly served by the Underground. Buses prove a little more of a challenge, but any diligent traveler will be able to figure them out in short order. Virtually every type of cuisine under the sun, from curries to sushi to Big Macs, can be found in London. The relative blandness of typical English food may have added to the popularity of international dishes here. Museums containing many of the greatest treasures of the Western world are plentiful, and the music and theatre scenes are among the most lively in the world.

London gets a very mixed bag of people, and given the English proclivity to ignore anything they think doesn't relate to them, you will probably find that people here are less likely to be rattled by things that might be unbelievable elsewhere. "Less likely" does not mean you can summon forth fire breathing dragons with impunity; simply that given the unusually high level of Banality among many people here, anything supernatural will probably be quickly explained away or forgotten by the average man on the street.

Hey Storyteller, Can I Bring My Uzi?

Britain has strict rules on the ownership and use of firearms. The only people who generally have guns are terrorists and criminals, and if you are discovered in possession of a gun, the police will assume that you are one or the other. In some rare cases, special operations teams fielded by the police may be packing, and in some cities police officers have guns in their cars. That's pretty much the limit. The same holds true for explosives; if you want to procure any, you will either have to go through a mountain of red tape (demonstrating your legitimate, legal use for such things) or through an illegal arms dealer, neither of which is likely to be quick or cheap. The usual roster of illicit substances are likewise forbidden.

Various branches of the Technocracy monitor customs records on a regular basis, and anyone bringing in significant quantities of scientific or medical equipment or supplies is likely to be noted and observed. British anti-terrorism laws give authorities the right to perform spontaneous searches, the likes of which may startle foreigners. Careful use of cantrips and magick can be used to circumvent the more obvious measures, but the extreme Banality inherent to the job (as well as the presence of occasional Technocratic mages) makes this far from a sure thing.



Westminster Abbey

Been to the Abbey, have you? Whole lot of dreams in that place, there is. What with all the writers in Poet's Corner, not to mention all the kings and queens and whatnot. So many tales of chivalry and betrayal, love and bitter hatred in those stones. It could set the coldest soul off on a daydream, that place could. Some say it's the influence of the Stone, but I say no. A lot of power is still locked in that rock, to be sure, but none of it's getting out so long as it stays south of the Wall. Just shows you what a lot of pansies those Caledonians are, that in all the centuries we've had it, they haven't been able to get it back!

— Mick Crimson, redcap wilder

Westminster Abbey is a shrine to the departed artists and dreamers of the Isle, as well as a favorite meeting place for Celestial Chorus mages. Poets, artists and even politicians come to the area known as Poets Corner for inspiration from the countless monuments to English creativity housed there. Writers, composers, architects and countless other dreamers are remembered here, and it is said that their ghosts return to the Abbey nightly to feel the warmth that remembrance brings. In turn, they bring inspiration to those who pay homage to their memories.

The Abbey has an almost palpable aura of sacredness to it, and even the presence of "Abbey Guided SuperTours" at £6 a head and up has done little to mar the atmosphere. Though not as important to most Choristers as Canterbury, the Abbey remains a potent symbol of the English national devotion to the One. Though faith has lessened in recent years, the Abbey remains a point of great national pride to both Sleepers and Awakened.

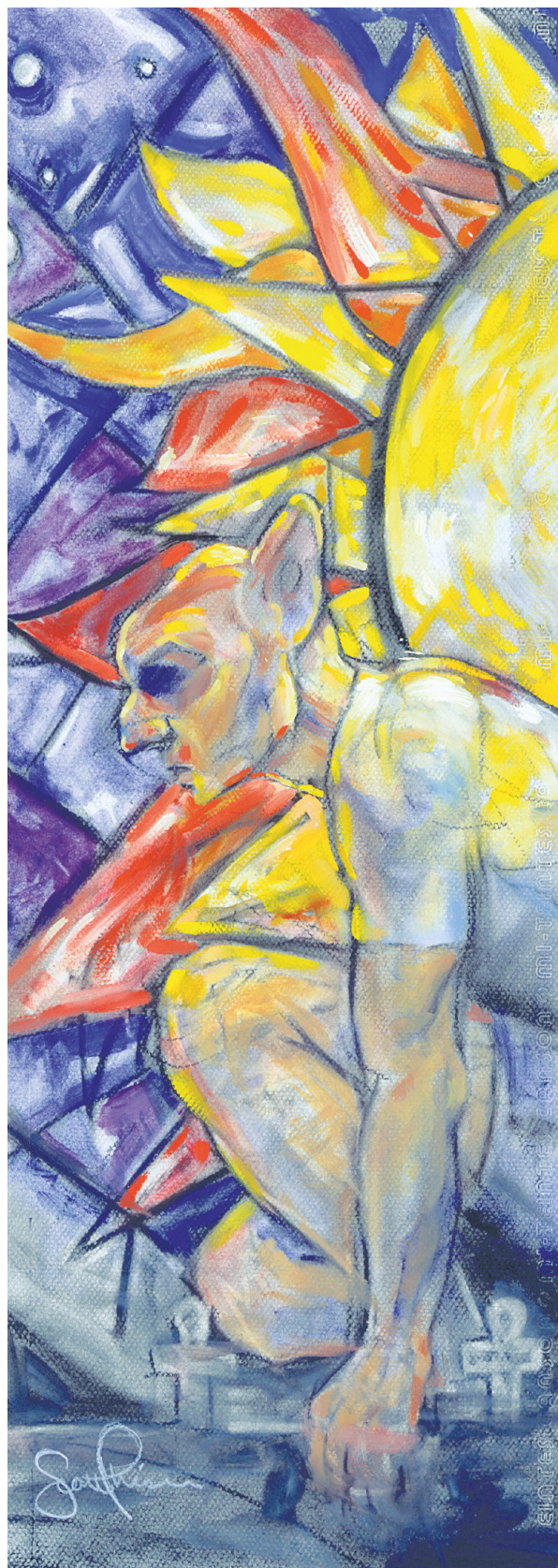
Westminster Abbey also houses the legendary Stone of Scone, a minor fae treasure with a history as long as that of the Isle itself. Rumored to have been hewn from a cliff in Arcadia long before the time of the Sundering, it was, some claim, a source of Glamour that helped to maintain the bond between the nobility and the land. But since it was stolen from Scotland in 1297, its power has gradually faded. Some changelings from Caledonia insist that if the stone was returned to its proper place in Scotland, it would regain its power, but for the time being it lies in state in the Abbey, as cold as the stone sepulchers that surround it.

The Tower of London

Can you feel it? There's something ancient here, older than the stones...something strong and wild and at once natural and alien. Maybe it's that old bloke's head, maybe something else. The ravens know, but they're not telling. Whatever it is, it's beyond me. I know when to leave well enough alone, unlike a lot of people 'round here.

— Davis Warfield, Hollow One

Beyond its historical significance, the Tower is loaded with ghosts, a few of whom include the "little princes" (reportedly murdered by King Richard III), Anne Boleyn, Lady Jane Gray, Catherine Howard, Sir Thomas More and the Earl of Essex. Although in many other areas ghosts would be banished as quickly as possible, the wraiths who inhabit the Tower are honored guests. They are an integral part of the stories surrounding the Tower, and to drive them out would be to diminish the power of their tales.



The legend goes that when the giant Bran the Blessed, king of Britain, fell in battle while attempting to claim Ireland, he ordered that his head be cut off and buried “beneath the white hill” in London, where it was said he would protect England from invasion. Over the seven years his companions took to return to England, the head remained uncorrupted and was even said to be a great wit. Bran was as good a companion in death as he had been in life.

A second legend tells that as long as there are ravens at the Tower, England will be protected from invasion. Those who guard the Tower have taken this to heart, and over the years have tried tethers, cages and countless other means to make sure there are always a few of the birds about.

For centuries, Bran’s head has stood watch over the island; it is said that during World War II, a team of Nazi occultists (some say rogue Technocrats) tried to infiltrate the Tower to sabotage its mystical protections. As history shows, their efforts did not succeed.

Some say that the enchantments laid upon the Tower must be renewed once each century, on the anniversary of the completion of the Tower. Of late, much controversy has erupted between the sidhe and mages of the Order of Hermes over who should perform the enchantment for the 900th anniversary of the Tower. The mages point out that in the sidhe’s absence, they have maintained the magicks alone, while the sidhe claim that the initial ritual involved fae magicks, for was Bran not one of their line?

Highgate Cemetery

I’m told the cemeteries in New Orleans and Paris get more tourists, but I for one am glad that we don’t see hordes of people passing through each day. Those who do trek out here are more likely ones with a real interest in the place, rather than those checking off a list of must-sees.

— Walt, sluagh childling

Not far from the homes of Freud and Keats, Highgate Cemetery is another spot more famous for death than life. It therefore comes as little surprise that most of the repeat visitors to this area are those whose interests are on the macabre side. George Elliot, Karl Marx and countless others whose names are less familiar lie buried beneath crumbling tombs, cedars and ivy. Mortals and supernatural beings come here to reflect upon mortality, death and what comes after.

A motley called the Young Ones has made Highgate its main gathering place. Perdita and Walt, two sluagh childlings, are the unofficial leaders of the group. The rest of the group is made up of Mock, a redcap wilder, and Corbin, a crow-pooka wilder. They gather in the far reaches of the East Cemetery periodically to write poetry, tend the ivy and to watch over the spirits of the place. The spot also draws a fair number of Euthanatos mages, though none seem to stay for long. The spirits of the place have never caused problems for the Young Ones, and the motley’s presence keeps a lot of undesirables out.

A schism threatened to break the group apart when a boggan named Miranda joined some years ago. Though she meant well, she felt compelled to help fix the place up. Before they realized

it, she had cleared the ivy away from several sections and had set about repairing the crumbling stonework. Since that time, she has contented herself to keeping the place clear of litter and bramble bushes, only occasionally stopping to see that the mossy stones are artfully arranged along the path.

Guilty Pleasures

Relax, have a cigar. Hell is full of high-court judges, failed saints. We’ve got cardinals, archbishops, barristers, certified accountants, music critics...they’re all here. You’re not alone. You’re never alone....

— Sting, “Saint Augustine in Hell”

Guilty Pleasures began as a monthly gathering of some of the young mortal nobility, who secretly got together to do all the things they feared the press would hear about them doing. Some say the club has existed in one form or another since the late 1700s, and vague references in the notes of Keats and Shelley give credence to these rumors. The club itself is in fact a private residence, and admittance is granted only to those on a select guest list. Invitations (sent out in black envelopes with silver gilt lettering) are occasionally given out to people who are unaware of the club’s existence, though never without a full background check. This check is usually used to uncover information that can be used to blackmail the invitee should he threaten to expose the true nature of the club.

Due to the status of the club’s patrons, security is incredibly tight. Cameras, motion detectors, dogs and more high-tech measures are utilized to keep unwanted guests from disturbing the nightly activities. Supernatural security is likewise state of the art, with unseen wraiths (their Fetters held in a vault deep below the club) watching the perimeter, and Awakened guards monitoring the main chambers.

New patrons are asked for their invitations by a liveried footman at the door. Just inside the sumptuous lobby, a receptionist gives each guest a “preferences” form to fill out, along with an identification number. Names are never used at Guilty Pleasures, unless they are pseudonyms. Those who are one-time guests only find memories of their evening to be hazy, and those who become regular patrons are usually given a small tattoo of an apple somewhere on their person. Portraits titled *Uncle Al* and *Uncle Ed* grace the mantelpiece, and those familiar with the lives of Aleister Crowley and Edward Kelley may recognize their likenesses. After a short waiting period, guests are escorted down to the parlor.

What goes on here? Anything you desire, quite literally. The finest food and drink is available, from sautéed prawns sprinkled with gold dust and lemon to silver-stemmed Belgian chocolate-covered cherries. The finest French wines, liquors from around the globe and the blood of virgins are all available for the asking. Many of the world’s finest musicians have played here, though sadly, few remember having done so. Opium remains the most fashionable “enhancement” among most of the patrons, but marijuana, cocaine, hashish, scorpion and all manner of uppers, downers and hallucinogens are available for those who wish to partake. Restraints of silver, velvet, leather, steel or even cold iron are available, and the wardrobe contains a vast array of garments to suit any mood

or persona. If your interests are more carnal, you will surely be able to find a partner to your liking from among the other patrons. If you don't find just what you are looking for, the owners keep members of the "downstairs staff" anesthetized until needed. Whether your tastes run from girls, boys, men, women, the living, dead or undead, there is someone for you on staff at Guilty Pleasures.

Although no formal records are kept of patrons at Guilty Pleasures, Lord Yrtalian, Augusta Holford, Corine Marcon, Sir Marriot D'Urban and Don Sidonia are known to have visited the place. Jodi Blake (see **Book of Madness**) is said to be, if not a member of the staff, then a regular attendee. But since she changes her looks so often, who can tell? Marianna of Balador (see **Cult of Ecstasy**) was an honored guest in years past, but turned into an enemy when she discovered the nature of some of the club's pleasures. Ashford Benn, a dapper arcane cultist, is among the staff as well.

The Acharne

An outgrowth of the Hellfire Club and others like it, the Acharne is a sect of the Cult of Ecstasy dedicated to pushing the senses beyond the limits dictated by "polite society." Very few outside the Cult are aware of the group's existence, and even many within are unwilling to acknowledge their dark brethren. In the Acharne's early years, diversions involved laudanum wine and seances, adultery and sodomy. This has escalated to include acts that would be condemned by most as perverse, unholy and disgusting.

The modern Acharne often congregate in private clubs for sadomasochistic rites of mutilation and ecstasy. All manner of drugs are available at such gatherings, and every new experience is seen as elevating consciousness. Congress with corpses, spirits and even demonic entities is said to be a central part of such rites.

Many mages feel that the actions of the Acharne at Guilty Pleasures have gone beyond the limits of permissible exploration. Their dealings with beings from the darker spirit realms and their violation of countless Sleepers in pursuit of their own "Enlightenment" has caused more than one mage (including Marianna of Balador) to condemn them as *barabbi*. Their willingness to help out members of the Traditions has kept most Acharne from being branded them Nephandi, and it cannot be denied that many past and present members do seem to gain insight and enlightenment from their experiences. Tradition and Technocracy mages look on the Acharne with suspicion, but as of yet, no one has taken steps to stop them.

Is it possible that the forces of the Technocracy in London are unaware of Guilty Pleasures? It hardly seems possible, yet night after night the doors open to another crowd of revelers seeking sensation and release.

2Right

Oi! Fuck off to a nunnery!

— The Skinhead's Hamlet

Gone are the days when King's Road was the center of the punk subculture, but for a trip in time back to that era, try 2Right. Brightly colored mohawks and multiple piercings are still in style here, whatever the case may be outside its spray-painted fire doors. Slam dancing (as opposed to moshing, which is viewed by most of the regulars at 2Right as the "sissy version") is still all the rage, and the night isn't considered to have begun until there is blood on the floor. Fortunately, the drinks are stiff enough to keep anyone from noticing.

The place is run by a brother and sister, Mick and Mary Crimson. The two are easily recognizable by their bright crimson hair, and by the fact that they seem to be younger than many of the patrons of their club. Changelings throughout Britain come to 2Right to dance, let their hair down and get to know two of the most colorful redcaps in London. The Young Ones from Highgate are frequent visitors; Mock in particular has taken a liking to the place.

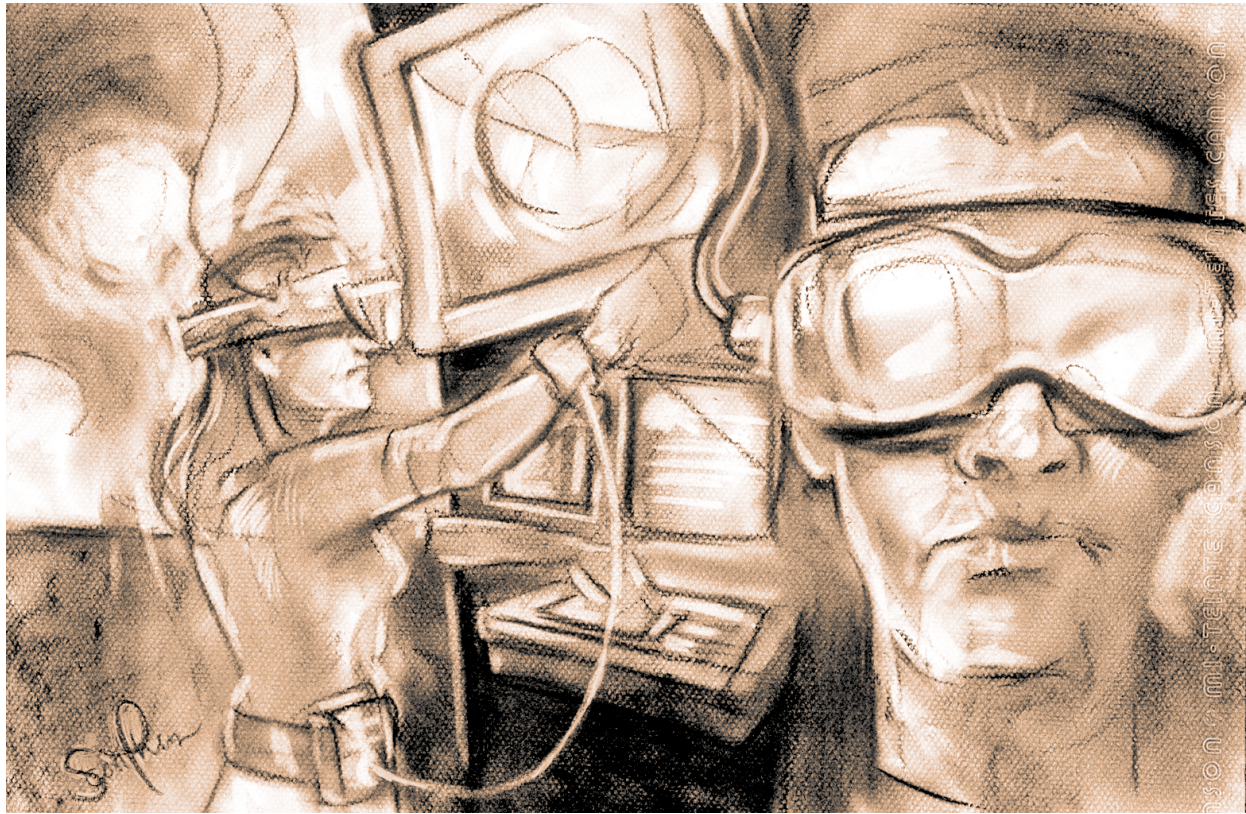
An eshu wilder named Litonya keeps the drinks and stories flowing, despite the din of the music. A long-time roadie whose experiences belie her youthful appearance, Litonya claims to have toured with nearly every band that has played at 2Right. Even her most loyal customers know that her stories are just a clever ploy to keep people at the bar, but the stories are so good, no one seems to mind.

Oxford

I have challenged Berwin to single combat, with the duel to take place a week hence. During that time, I hope to negotiate a peace between our people, but should it come to blows, I will strike without hesitation. If he could only be made to see how things have changed, I believe that even Berwin would see that the time is not yet ripe for a sidhe ruler here. He knows nothing of the people, of those who have built Oxford into what she is today.

— Lady Garyn Garfield, in a letter to Edgar Whitestone shortly before her death

Percy Bysshe Shelley, Oscar Wilde, Lewis Carroll, C. S. Lewis and J. R. R. Tolkien are but a few of the names of the students and teachers who've spent time at Oxford, but they are some of the best-known among changelings and their kin. Since the time of the Shattering (by which time Oxford had been churning out educated lads for some two centuries), the area has been overseen by a series of rulers, primarily trolls of the Seelie court. When the sidhe returned some three decades ago, Oxford was the site of one of the worst battles in the War of Ivy. The final duel between Lady Garyn Garfield, the troll ruler prior to the Resurgence, and Lord Berwin Lindell of House Gwydion, was the stuff of legend, with Lady Garyn wielding a greatsword and



Lord Berwin fighting with rapier and main gauche. For a while the troll's strength and stamina were formidable, but the sidhe lord's quick, precise strokes and nimble step brought him victory in the end. Though Lord Berwin rules as lord of Oxfordshire today, he does so over a county all but deserted of commoners, most of whom were devoted to Lady Garyn.

With regard to magick, Oxford has been under the control of the Technocracy for more than two centuries. Some even claim that the first colleges were begun so that medieval mages and Craftsmasons would have suitable assistants versed in the Classical languages and disciplines. Prior to the Convention of the White Tower, members of the Hippocratic Circle worked alongside members of the Houses of Hermes, and differences in methodology rarely stood in the way of philosophical debate and academic inquiry. The Battle of Grimsfen Tor (see Chapter One), less than 100 years after the founding of the first colleges, caused the first major schism between the two groups. Hasty apologies and protestations that "thee affayres of our fellowes must not interfere wyth thee pursuit of knowledge" quickly smoothed things over, but set the stage for increasing conflict. Over the years, most of the Hermetics migrated over to the Chantry established at Cambridge, as the Oxford Chantry became increasingly interested in a single "truth": that of the science embraced by the Technocracy.

Waltham College: A Technocracy Construct

*And seeing ignorance is the curse of God,
Knowledge the wing wherewith we fly to Heaven.*

— William Shakespeare, Henry VI

Waltham College, though not officially part of the university system, has been home to many of the greatest minds in British science (whether as scientists or in the many sealed glass containers lining laboratory shelves). Founded in the late 18th century by a maverick German scientist, Waltham College is a privately funded institution dedicated to "high science": that of the Progenitors, mainly. A wing of the college was once devoted to the work of the Electrodynic Engineers, but it has been used little since the defection of the Sons of Ether. Many of the students educated here go on to promising careers at the Grimsfen Research Facility, built on the site of an ancient fae mound.

Cambridge

Begun by students dissatisfied with Oxford, Cambridge has gone on to rival her elder sister town. Although some changelings continue to live here, the increasingly banal atmosphere is driving many away. Despite the sterile, feeling (no doubt fed by the Technocracy Construct nearby) creeping over parts of the university, the people of Cambridge still have a strong connection to the land.

Barrow College: A Chantry

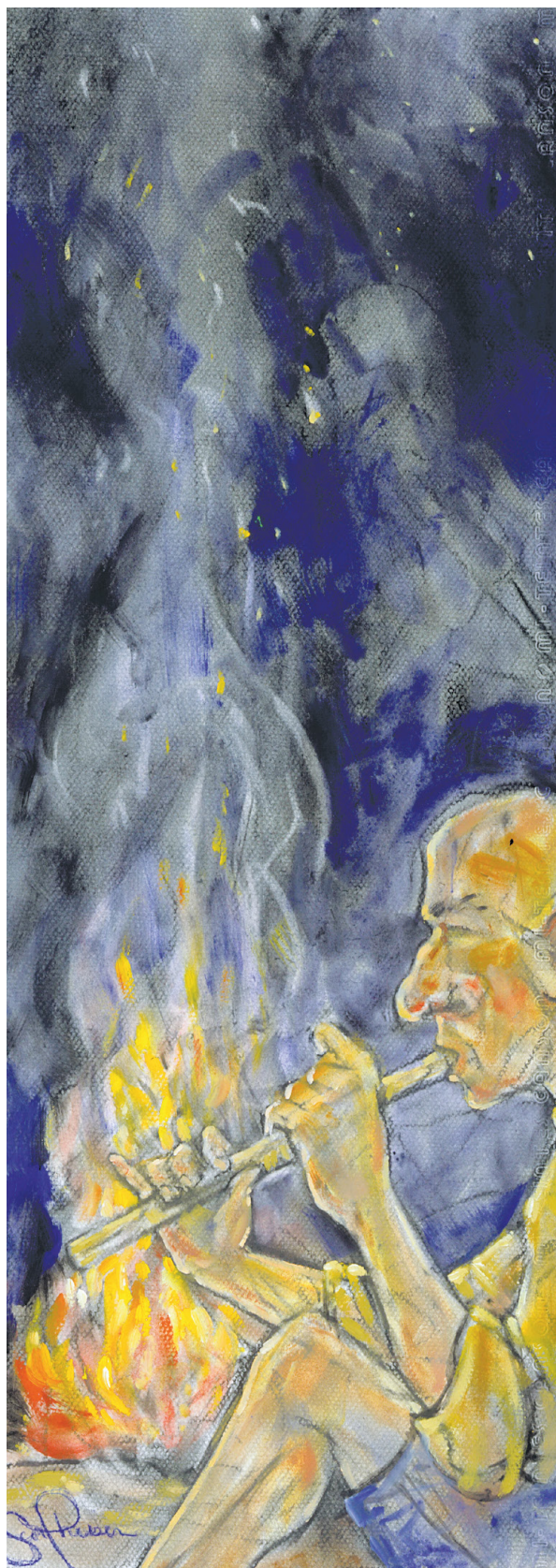
I have taken all knowledge to be my province.

— Francis Bacon

Although the Chantry located here has traditionally been dominated by Hermetic mages, in recent years more and more Sons of Ether and Virtual Adepts have been accepted as fellows. In the past decade, two nockers, Osric "Otto" Mobile and Jackie Philipps have also been elected to the select group, and their collaborations with the Sons of Ether in residence have been productive, if sometimes explosive. Their common goal: the pursuit of knowledge, in whatever form it may take. Some claim that the young Bert Russell was an assistant here while studying at Cambridge, and the fellows will have you believe that nearly every British scientist and philosopher of the past two centuries has shared a cup of tea in the parlor. Many have, and that should come as no surprise; while magical studies are the primary focus of their work, the researchers here excel in many fields.

One collaborative project between the various researchers that has drawn considerable attention has been the attempts to duplicate elfshot. The secrets of the magical arrowheads have been lost since the disappearance of the famed Wayland Smith, but recently a number of research trips to the barrow known as Wayland's Smithy have provided clues to the origins of these magical weapons. Legends tell that elfshot will burrow deeper and deeper into the flesh, evading all attempts by midwives and surgeons to remove it. In this way, a single mediocre archer armed with elfshot may hold a position longer than the best marksman wielding normal arrows. Avenues of research being pursued include the relative speed of normal versus enchanted arrows, potential protective armor, and the possibility of enchanting bullets in the same manner. The Chantry has received extensive funding from an anonymous source for this project, and some fear that its benefactor may be an Unseelie leader with designs on the throne. Others believe that the money can be traced to a group calling itself the "Round Table." Most of the researchers are hesitant to look a gift horse in the mouth, though, and simply wish to pursue their research without interference.

In recent years, rumors have persisted about a possible alliance between Barrow College and Waldham College in Oxford. Although this has been denied by parties on both sides, the possibility is far from remote. Though the methodologies and theories espoused by the two sides are radically different, members of both groups have been censored in the past for their willingness to debate new ideas with the opposition. Some claim that the recent departure of staunch Traditionalist Professor Twidmarch from the Chantry for parts north relates to these under-the-table dealings.



Windsor

Bloody idiots. It's not just the disrespect for history, we're talkin' a whole other level of stupidity. D'you know, I actually heard some bloke the other day say, "Sure an' it's a lovely castle and all, but why'd they have to build it so close to the bloomin' airport?"

— Rick "Rusty" Naylor, redcap grump

Notable as the official residence of the royals, Windsor was also where the first sighting of the Questing Beast in the 20th century happened. The ancient oak tree known as Herne's Oak has long been associated with the fae, and some believe that a trod between Windsor and Arcadia once had its terminus there. Modern changelings investigating the area have come up with no evidence of the trod, but if it did once exist, it is likely that it has not been used in centuries. Of course, if it did, that would go a long way toward explaining the sightings of fantastic beasts in the woods nearby.

The roar of airplanes at nearby Heathrow Airport has marred the fairy tale quality the town once possessed, and the decline of the monarchy has meant that each year fewer tourists are inspired by the sight of the royal residence. Nearby Eton has been dominated by the forces of the New World Order for decades now, shaping the boys who will go on to lead the nation.

The Kingdom of Chalk

Oh, I've heard the stories of how you want to regain control of the rebellious county across the water, but you should know by now that the Kithain of Brocéliande and Brittany are doing just fine without you. And don't think we don't know of your plans to reopen the trod from Cornwall to Mont-St-Michel. Let us just say that like your Kingdoms of Mist and Stone and Branches and whatever else, we would like to remain cordial allies, but no more.

— Gerard Berrant, eshu of France

The Kingdom of Chalk has historically had the most contact with the Continental kingdoms, owing to its close proximity to France. Though it was the first area settled by the Romans (and the first to feel the sting of the Banality they brought), its ties to Arcadia and her erstwhile sons and daughters have remained strong. Since the days of its first ruler, the eshu talespinner Benin, the Kingdom of Chalk has been known for its frequent festivals and warm hospitality. Though occasional problems with Thallain and the Prodigal have plagued individual duchies, the kingdom as a whole has remained one of the more peaceful areas of Albion.

The chalky soil of the southern counties is well-known throughout the country; for those used to the rich black-brown earth of the northern kingdoms, the sight of Sussex chalk-mud can prove downright disturbing. Looking more like freshly mixed concrete or paste than soil, many a traveler has marveled at how anything can grow in such stuff. But all criticisms are silenced at the first sight of the chalk downs by moonlight, when the very ground itself seems to shine like silver. At times like these, it is easy to see why childlings have for untold generations, believed

that the moon was crafted by a nocker from the silvery ground of the south.

Like most areas of the Isle of the Mighty, the Kingdom of Chalk has its share of standing stones. While perhaps not as well-known as Stonehenge or as potent as Castlerigg, they too serve as connecting points between the people and the land, as crossroads between worlds and as neutral meeting places controlled by no single faction or individual. The western duchies of the kingdom are particularly rich in standing stones and dolmens.

Brighton

Oh yes, I've heard Pacifica's lovely and all, but I wouldn't trade Brighton for all the dross in Concordia, and that's the truth. Oh, we've Pizza Hut and McDonalds for you homesick colonials, but you've not lived 'til you've had take-away from the little Indian restaurant between London Road and Five Ways, down by the cinema. That, and then a pint of cider down by the Pier, and no amount of Sussex drizzle can keep you down.

— Gilda Hazlitt, boggan wilder

About an hour south of London by rail on the southern coast, Brighton is home to one of the most active, youthful cultures in Britain. Some call it "The San Francisco of England," and it does share much in common with its sister city in Pacifica — a strong gay subculture, a thriving intellectual community and a sense of fun even a childling would envy. But it also has a history and a flavor all its own — a flavor that its Concordian cousin will never match.

Brighton has long stood as an emblem of escapism to the English since before the days of Prince George, more than a century ago. Whether it played host to Londoners in need of a seaside holiday or to those who wished to lose themselves in the music and glare of the Pier lights, many people have come to Brighton to forget. Though the majority of this is innocent, darker forces are also at work in the shadows.

Brighton's two most famous attractions are the Palace Pier (a riot of sound and light reminiscent of that in *The Lost Boys*) and the Royal Pavilion, an Eastern-inspired confection of a building that looks decidedly out of place in the otherwise typically English city. The Pier itself is host to slot machines, arcades and overpriced souvenir and snack shops, as well as carnival-type rides, karaoke bars and a few fortune tellers, all on a strip of wood and concrete jutting out into the Atlantic. The Pavilion, once the residence of the naughty Prince George, was opened to the public as a museum by a thoroughly disgusted Queen Victoria. Rumors persist of a network of secret corridors and canals beneath the city that hid the perversions of past rulers from the eyes of loyal subjects. The local sluagh firmly deny that such canals exist.

Further down the shore, the West Pier, a broken down ruin, stands like a ghostly shadow of the Palace Pier. A few sluagh wilders have claimed the place as their own, gathering on the shaky foundations to find some peace from the sound and fury of the city. Occasionally sheets of parchment adorned with charcoal sketches and fragments of poetry, drift onto the nearby beach.

Pandora's Box

I can't honestly say I like what you've done with the place, Gladys. The place has all but lost that charm, that era of mystery and mortality it had back in my day. I hope you know most of my regular clientele wouldn't be caught dead in here anymore, if you'll pardon the expression. Although, I must say, those lasers you've installed are absolutely fascinating...the play of color and light... really quite something....

— Reginald Waterford, former owner of Pandora's Box

Probably the best-known changeling nightspot outside London, Pandora's Box has a well-deserved reputation for the hottest music and dance in the south of England. While it has a higher-than-average percentage of gay couples in attendance on any given night, Pandora's is popular with a wide variety of clients, from local students from the Universities of Brighton and Sussex to tourists and the local changeling populace.

Pandora's Box is owned and operated by Gilda and Gladys Hazlitt, a pair of Kithain who have turned what was once a seaside dive into a thriving business. It is said that the former owner, one Reginald Waterford, catered to a somewhat more gothic clientele, though thankfully, most of the black eyeliner/palefaced crowd, as Regina calls them, have found other watering holes. Less known among the general populace are the circumstances under which the club changed hands. Among those who claim to know the story, it is said that Gladys won it from Reginald in a duel. The details are shadowy, but apparently Gladys had tricked him into drinking some highly intoxicating beverage just prior to the duel, though others claim that she was doing something entirely different with Reg in the back room.

The lights and music at Pandora's are without equal in Brighton, and the drinks are known both for their potency and wide variety; Gladys claims to be able to mix any drink ever concocted. Some say that she has developed a vegetarian version of a drink popular among some of the club's former patrons, apparently some variation on a Bloody Mary.

The Wrinkled Page

Wot, this here mace? Quite a basher, wouldn't ye say? Now, don't go spreadin' it around, but this 'appens to be the lost mace of St. Cuthbert. Thought it was just a legend? Well, guess again, lad. Y'see this sword? I 'ave it on very good authority that this is the sword wielded by St. George himself! The jools on the hilt here, they're made of the blood of...what'd ye say? You're looking to buy just such a thing? Now, I wasn't going to sell it, but for you....

— Cedric Evans, proprietor of the Wrinkled Page

In the heart of downtown Brighton sits a pedestrian district of narrow, twisting alleys known as the Laines. Once the home of fisherfolk who worked the seas, the Laines now house a variety of restaurants, antique and curio shops. One of the oldest of these shops is the Wrinkled Page, whose whimsical sign depicts an elderly courtier. Tourists and locals often stop in, as much to hear the stories behind the various knickknacks as to buy anything.

The proprietor of the store is one Cedric Evans, a gentleman with a shaggy beard, a twinkle in his eye and a spring in his step, despite his age. He seems to have read every book on the shelves of the store several times over, and will recite the entire history of any of the various antiques in the store as if their lineage was more important than that of the queen.

Though he will usually invent a story behind any given item, if he doesn't know one already, he does have an impressive memory for the stories and legends of the area. The fact that other Kithain will immediately recognize him as a pooka (with a mien reminiscent of an Old English sheep dog) doesn't mean that all his tales are fibs...just most of them.

Canterbury

A few years back, an aspiring Acolyte of mine took it upon herself to write a sort of Canterbury Tales, which told the story of the different magical groups of Britain and how they came to influence the British national character. Quite an interesting study, really, even if the bit with the Seeress of Chronos was a bit racy.

— Magdalena Lindroth, Celestial Chorister

Since the coming of Christianity to England, Canterbury has been one of the faith's strongholds. The first missionaries to come to the Isle were quick to condemn the native fae there and elsewhere as demons, and encouraged the local populace to break all ties with the Good Folk. Though some continued to follow the old ways, leaving cream and cakes outside each night, most fae found the area to be inhospitable and retreated from the sound of the church bells. Many made their way to Glastonbury, where the old and new faiths were able to exist side by side.

So while Canterbury has long been avoided by most changelings and their kin, increasing tolerance on the part of the Church has drawn more Kithain back to this beautiful town. The local university is known for studies in alternate spirituality, and tolerance levels have been steadily increasing without any decrease in the faith or spirituality of the place.

If changelings have stayed clear of Canterbury, the opposite is true of Celestial Chorus mages. Since the first Sons of Mitras and members of the Sacred Congregation came to the island with the Romans and later conquerors, Canterbury has been the focal point for Christianity in the Isles. The periodic schisms that have rocked the mortal Church hierarchy have had effects on that of the Chorus as well. Though opinions were sharply divided at the time of the formation of the Anglican Church in the 1500s, most Choristers have tried to disassociate themselves from the politics of the world — at least, as much as possible in a country where there is no separation of Church and state.

The Principality of Cornwall

Sometimes you can see the remains of a sunken city just off the coast, when the light is just right. Other times, you see nothing. If I hadn't seen

it with my own eyes, I'd not be telling you, but there it was, shimmering beneath the waves. Some say it's the home of a motley of mad mages. I've heard them called Bold Marauders, but I hold with those who say it's echoes of Ys off in the Dreaming we're seeing.

— Mitch Kindling, redcap knight

Once its own kingdom, the southwest corner of England is now part of the Kingdom of Chalk. Dartmoor Park has been the site of more than one midsummer gathering, away from the prying eyes of mortals. Stone circles litter the landscape of the southwest like nowhere else in the south of England. The Merry Maidens, Mên-an Tol, countless dolmens and barrows remain popular gathering spots with local Kithain, who seek to remember the tales of the past.

St. Michael's Mount, a craggy island at the southern tip of Cornwall, is the terminus of the so-called St. Michael's Ley, or Dragon Ley. Legends from Mont-Saint-Michel off the Brittany coast in France imply that the two places were once connected by a trod, but no evidence remains today.

Tintagel

They say the wind off the sea can howl like the dead on a moonless winter night, but we hear the cries of centuries gone by, the weeping of a hundred souls being pulled apart by Banality when the magics of their stones cannot hold. And there's one up in Glastonia what bears the blame, for holding the faults of one against the lives of a hundred what wanted only to have a glade to shelter from the Autumn wind.

Some say we folk don't walk the Earth as restless spirits when our bodies pass on, but they've not heard the wind through the ruins on All Soul's Night here.

— Danny Kenson, sluagh of Cornwall

Once a great castle, Tintagel now lies in ruins. The remaining structure was built in 1236 by the Earl of Cornwall. Legend claims Tintagel to have been the birthplace of King Arthur (at least, according to some English versions of the legend) and the location of the cave where Merlin was imprisoned.

Some claim that the castle was built at the insistence of the earl's wife, who was kinain. Ill omens had shown that the time of the Shattering was drawing near, and some of the fae in the area hoped that a stronghold might be constructed that could draw upon the energies of the nearby ley lines and hold together the fraying threads that bound the land of Fairie to the land of men. Whether such a thing could have been possible is up for debate, but in the end, no freeholds at Tintagel survived the Shattering.

Disputes over the locations and ownership of any new freeholds split the region's fae into a dozen or more factions, some of which hastily attempted to find suitable places to found freeholds of their own. But sacred stones potent enough to sustain freeholds were hard to find. Some claim a quarrel between the earl's wife, who is said to have served as one of the maidens at Bride's Hall in her youth, and Megan, the guardian of the flame in Glastonbury, resulted in a refusal to allow any fae of Cornwall to partake of the Great Balefire at Bride's Hall to establish new freeholds for a period of a hundred years. There is some evidence of this to be found at a nearby stone circle, as well as in the so-called "Merlin's Cave" nearby Tintagel, but neither is a freehold today.

Ley Lines

The study of etheric conduits is one that has plagued scholars for countless centuries, and in truth, we know little more now than we did a generation ago about the means by which they function. If any of you would like to present a term paper on the status of research in this field, preferably with new research of your own incorporated into the body of knowledge thus far accumulated, please see me following the lecture.

— Dr. Tanya Beckensthwate, Son of Ether, from a lecture at Barrow College

Understood by many cultures throughout the world, ley lines carry the life energy of Gaia to every point in the world. Most major Nodes, freeholds and caerns lie along these "old straight tracks," and any place where two or more lines cross is likely to be a place of legend. Even ghost stories tell of the mystic power of crossroads. Scholars among Kithain, mages and other supernaturals have varying theories on the origin and exact nature of the leys, none of which seem to wholly capture their essence. But regardless of which theory a given scholar ascribes to, all agree that their power seems greater in the Isle of the Mighty than elsewhere in the world.

The Kingdom of Mist

We take tradition seriously here, and you would do well to follow suit while you are in our domain. If you have any doubt on an issue, speak to the seneschal or any of the other officers of the court. We respect the desires and needs of both courts, though you would do well to remember which of us holds sway at any given time. While Morwyd might look on the actions of that unfortunate pooka childling who was here last summer as delightful pranks, I was completely within my rights to order his execution for poisoning Chalice Well with hallucinogens.

— Queen Karolinda of Glastonia

Though its official title is Kingdom of Mist, this region is known by many other names among both Kithain and mortals. The Summerlands, the Land of Apples, the Kingdom of Scrumpy, Glastonia and the West Country are but a few of the local names for this enchanted land. Its strong ties to legends of Camelot and Avalon are perhaps what it is best known for, but there is more to this area than the visitor sees at first glance.

The name of this kingdom dates back to the time of the Sundering. Even as the rest of the world broke with the Dreaming, as the trods became obscured and whole freeholds were being swallowed up, the West Country's ties between the people and the fae remained strong. Even as the two worlds pulled apart, Glastonia remained whole...more or less. While in other areas trods disappeared completely and gates to the Dreaming shattered like falling icicles, much of the Land of Apples was engulfed in strange mists. While many of the places the fae cherished elsewhere lay far from human settlements, in Glastonia fae and mortals lived side by side, drinking from the same wells and observing

the same festivals. Some nodded, and said that the mists were the land's way of sorting out what was fae and what was not.

In time, the mists receded, leaving behind a land forever changed. Lakes, islands and glades vanished, and tragically, few noted their passing. It was not until much later that the true power of the mists was realized: During the time they clouded the landscape, they worked a powerful magic on all who lived there, causing them to forget that many of these places ever existed. Many now see these mists as the same force that clouds changelings' memories of Arcadia.

Bath

If you've got time, come on up and look at this scrollcase we found out in the back room. Looks like the notes from some Hermetic with a thing for architecture. See, here's an old map of the city, and then here are all these equations and stuff...then again, it could be a leftover from the last time we had that motley of pookas staying here. If you can make anything of it, it's yours. Otherwise it's kindling for the next bonfire. Kidding! Gah, you lot are so touchy about things.

— Charles McGreen, Ecstatic Mage

A gathering place for the rich, the infirm and vacationers since the time of the Romans, Bath remains popular among modern travelers. The reputed magical properties of its healing waters have drawn pilgrims from all over the Isles and the world. Where the ancient Britains saw the work of the goddess Sulis, Roman conquerors saw instead the familiar face of Minerva, goddess of wisdom. Legends tell that Shakespeare's King Lear once came here to take the waters, and older legends still connect the Bard's aging king with older tales of Lyr, a sea deity. This age-old struggle between forces of order and formal wisdom with those of sensuality and a wisdom older than words has left its mark on the city and the stories that celebrate it. Clearly, the waters of Bath have stirred the imagination for centuries. But what do modern supernaturals find in this society town in the West Country?

It is said that the modern city's architects knew of the magical properties of the land, and sought to focus its energies through complex figures and runes enscribed into the Earth through the circles and crescents that make up the modern city's streets. But despite apparent attempts to codify and control the wild energies of the waters that give Bath its name, despite the veneer of polite society frosting the salons and parlors along its gently curving streets, the inherently sensual nature of the place shines through.

Fellowship Hall

Now don't go passing this on to just anyone, mind you, but every time there's a full moon on a Saturday, a bunch of us go down to the ruins for some skinny dipping. It used to be a lot more fun, but lately Queen Karolinda has been trying to tag along with us. I mean, what are you going to say to the queen, "Sorry lass, it's a private party?" So things have gotten pretty tame of late. We're thinking of moving it to new moons on Sunday...what d'ye think?

— Celia, Unseelie satyr of Fellowship Hall

Not far from Bath sits a manor house, first constructed in the days of King James I. Nestled in the center of several acres of apple orchards, Fellowship Hall has been the site of many of

The Shining Mists

I wandered into the mists just outside Wells, just before dawn one morning, on my way to visit a cousin of mine at Bride's Hall. By the time I finally got back to town, it was near on to midnight. When I realized I was out of there, the only thing I could remember were snippets of some song...damned if I can remember how it goes. What I wouldn't give for another shot to write that tune down.

— Liam O'Donnelly, Fianna Galliard and folk singer

From time to time, the mists are sighted in the West Country, and their arrival always means that reality is about to go on hold temporarily. Those who have seen the Shining Mists from a distance describe them as a warm, humid, indistinct cloud, stirred by a light breeze scented with apple blossoms. Pale colors shimmer and dart around within the Shining Mists, almost hypnotically. Those who lose their way in a mist-shrouded area usually remember only wandering briefly in, then finding their way out again. Some return hours or days later, some not at all. It has been speculated that these unearthly mists form a kind of temporary gateway to Arcadia, the Shadowlands or the Umbra. Some who return from the Shining Mists remember vague visions of the past or future, but most recall nothing at all. Whatever the mists' cause or meaning, most residents of the Kingdom of Mist are neither surprised nor worried when swirling clouds are seen on the horizon. The mists are as much a part of the land as are the hills or the streams, and those who live here wouldn't have it any other way.

The Two Courts

Why I get stuck with the lousy weather months is beyond me. I mean, some traditions are meant to be broken, right? What say next year I get the summer and you take the winter? Oh fine. Well, if there was a high king, you're damned right I'd appeal to him. Bloody stupid that you always get the sunny months if you ask me.

— King Morwyd of the Mistlands

The king and queen of the Mistlands are among the only rulers in the land who still observe the changing of the seasons as the fae did in centuries past. Though the current rulers are sidhe, commoners maintained the tradition of the "two courts" throughout the Interregnum, despite the fact that with each passing year, fewer neighboring kingdoms observed this ritual. Since the kingdom's founding in 1544, two rulers have always reigned; one Seelie and the other Unseelie. The Seelie monarch rules from Beltaine to Samhain Eve, while the Unseelie ruler holds sway over the winter months from Samhain to Beltaine Eve. Though in most cases the two rulers act as king and queen, during those periods when both rulers were male (or female), they have been known as king (or queen) and consort.

the Kingdom of Mists' most famous gatherings, despite the fact that its lord is not one of the Good Folk.

Fellowship Hall is in fact a Chantry, a meeting place and stronghold of a group of Cult of Ecstasy mages. The hall stands on land that has, since the late middle ages, been the headquarters in England for a sect of Ecstatics known as the Fellowship of Pan in one form or another. Membership has varied over the years, but today only five Ecstatics gather here.

Since its founding, the Fellowship of Pan has encouraged close ties between the Ecstatics and satyrs. The drinking contests waged at Fellowship Hall are legendary, as are other more athletic tests of endurance. Satyrs are among the most common Kithain guests, but all commoners are made welcome, so long as they are willing to join in the festivities. Whether their guests come for an evening or a month, whether they stop for an evening of revelry or for a safe haven from those who seek to do them harm, all save the fae lords are made welcome. For its part in aiding their satyr allies in the War of Ivy, the Fellowship remains unpopular with the sidhe, though neither side wants to be the one to initiate hostilities.

If, over the course of an evening, guests hear the tale of how the goats and their allies drove a cabal of Hermetic mages from the area, it will not be the first time such a tale has been told. If any survivors on the Hermetic side told their tale, no doubt the story would be different, but they seem to have abandoned the place to the goats and their kin.

Glastonbury

I would that the Mistlands would consider joining with us as a single kingdom, if only for the protection of Glastonbury. They love to point out the Compact as their finest hour, but the truth of the matter is that there are more individuals and groups who want control of the place than just those molding sorcerers in Vienna. But they must have their way, and so we keep our distance. But borders or no, if I hear of anyone trying to take Glastonbury, I'll be the first one down there on the front lines fighting to keep it in kithain hands.

— Edgar Whitestone, Regent of the Roselands

Glastonbury stirs the imagination, even in those unfamiliar with fae history. Its ties to the Arthurian legends as well as other ancient British and Irish tales, its rich Christian history and, more recently, the modern annual festival of music and arts have kept the town and its environs rich in Glamour as few other places are.

Glastonbury owes some of its privacy to the British public transit authorities, for while most "sights" are serviced by daily trains from London, travelers who wish to reach Glastonbury via public transport must first take a train from London to Bath, a bus from Bath to Wells, and finally another bus from Wells to Glastonbury. Unlike Stratford-upon-Avon, Glastonbury has managed to avoid drawing a constant stream of tour busses, and not a single fast-food restaurant or high-rise hotel mars the high street. The throngs that come to the arts festival, drawing performers from across the globe (and producing a flood of Glamour as well) each June camp in nearby fields, and most travelers during less busy seasons stay in the abundant bed and breakfast homes.

Glastonbury's residents prefer it that way. While improved transportation and accommodations might draw more tourist

Crop Circles

The phenomenon known as crop circles is far from a new occurrence. Nor is it due, as some would have it, to the intervention of extradimensional beings. In truth, these patterns observed in fields nearby and abroad are due to the strong electromagnetic fields produced when two or more etheric conduits, or in the vulgar, ley lines, cross. Though in most cases the junctures operate without any sort of etheric spillage, any tampering with the energy thereof can produce a kind of magical backlash which, in many cases, manifests itself as a pattern in nearby fields.

— Dr. Tanya Beckensthwite, Son of Ether, lecturing at Barrow College

In recent years, a strange phenomenon has occurred in fields throughout Britain, and recently in America as well. Strange circles and patterns have appeared in fields of grain, with no apparent cause. Some claim UFOs are the cause. Others see signs from one or more deities in the circle. Those Sleepers who study the works of ceremonial magicians of the past and present wonder if the figures drawn with mathematical precision in the fields of the West Country may not portend the work of ancient sages. Scientists have attempted to discover what causes this phenomenon, but as yet they have made no progress.

Nor are they likely to. The whole crop circle craze was started one summer night when Fellowship Hall played host to several pooka. After much drinking and laughing (and not a little mocking of an Order of Hermes mage of mutual acquaintance), several highly inebriated mages and changelings decided to have some fun. The results have been recorded in every tabloid and New Age journal in Europe and America, and many have taken up the challenge to produce fanciful designs in fields across the world. Apparently the fad has ended, for no new circles have been found lately in the area. Or are they simply waiting for the interest to die down so they can do it again?

money, the effect it would have on the spirit of the place would be irreparable. And that is something that the supernatural denizens of the area will not allow to happen — not when Glastonbury is possibly the most potent magical spot in Britain.

Tourist Glastonbury

Y'know, I never would have thought it, but the bottled water they sell from the spring has become something of a collectors item. Last week I hear some Council Associates research outfit over in Austria ordered a whole case of it for testing. I can tell you, there's nothing in that water that hasn't been cataloged and sifted out a hundred times. What on Earth would they be testing it for, d'you think?

— Mike Everton, nocker of Glastonbury

In many areas, the coming of Christianity brought with it a new kind of Banality, which forbade the notion of things fae. But

in Glastonbury, the old, the new and the eternal have managed to meld together into an area rich in Glamour and story, where people of diverse faiths and philosophies have been able to come together in peace... most of the time. The initial establishment of the abbey provoked conflicts between the Wyck of the area and the Christian missionaries, though in time the two groups came to live in peace. The destruction of Glastonbury Abbey was commanded by King Henry VIII, as a result of his break with the Catholic Church, and it is notable that this was the result of politics between mortals — not disputes between the Awakened. Barring problems with Tremere vampires, the supernatural denizens of the Vale of Avalon have kept the peace longer than even the stones remember.

• The Tor and The Well

The Tor is a terraced hill rising up from the surrounding countryside. Its presence can be felt for miles around, just as its imposing shadow falls over the fields and streams of the land at its base. A tower is all that remains of a small chapel that once stood atop the Tor, and in modern times sheep and New Age pilgrims are the only ones likely to be seen on its banks. Some smoke or light incense in the shelter of the tower at the summit, but most find the atmosphere of the place itself heady enough without further stimulation.

At the foot of the Tor, a walled and landscaped garden surrounds one of the most famous wells in the Isles. Believed by ancient Christians to flow with the blood of Christ, the Chalice Well was supposedly the final resting place of the Holy Grail. Local legends state that the initial struggle between the pagan people of the area and the Christian missionaries ended when a chalice filled with the blood of one of the Wyck was placed at the bottom of the well. Modern scholars now attribute the water's ruddy color to iron deposits deep underground, but the variety of tales linking the well to blood magic are enough to give one pause. Other traditions tell that the goddess Brigid left her bag of healing herbs buried in the ground near the well, and that its power continues to infuse the water with healthful properties.

Those who have seen the passing of the years, such as Megan of Bride's Hall, claim that the well itself has no innate magical powers beyond the slight dweaomer possessed by anything which has been the subject of so many dreams and legends. The water is healthful, but no more so than that from any other well in the area.

• Wearyall Hill

Said to be the site where Joseph of Arimathea (a merchant uncle of Jesus Christ) planted his staff in the ground, producing a thorn tree, Wearyall Hill has long been revered by Christians. But before and since, its more ancient ties to the land and its people have been known to the changelings and their allies.

Local legends claim that the tree will burst into bloom in the presence of royalty. In truth, there was a time when the tree would bloom in the presence of true royalty, but it had less to do with the crowns on their heads than the blood that pulsed in their veins.

The origin of the legend comes from the fact that the tree is attuned to the land and its most ancient guardians, the fae. Some say that it was planted from a cutting brought from Arcadia, while another variant of the legend states that it was a gift from the local sidhe ruler to a magician who traveled from a far-away

land more than two millennia ago. Since the Shattering, the tree has grown more sensitive to the presence of Glamour, as it has ebbed from the world.

The royal line of England once carried the blood of the fae, but since the throne of England was assumed by foreigners who held no true connection to the land, that blood was lost. Although over the ages many rulers from abroad have come to govern England, in the past those who governed the land formed a connection with it, whether through the ancient marriage or other, long-forgotten rituals. However, the Germanic house of Windsor (née Saxe-Coburg-Gotha) bore none of the fae blood, and dismissed the warnings of those who asked that they bind themselves to the land. The ancient thorn therefore senses no connection between modern royalty, the land or the fae, so the tale of the tree blooming in the presence of royalty has been dismissed as just another old superstition. Others claim that in the presence of the true high king of Britain's changelings, the tree will burst forth in a shower of chimerical blossoms. Nary a bud has been seen on the tree of late, and it is whispered that this does not bode well for the changelings nor the land.

• The Abbey

In the heart of town sit the ruins of Glastonbury Abbey, destroyed by the soldiers of King Henry VIII when he broke all ties to the Catholic Church in the 16th century. When messengers brought word of the approaching army to the abbey, a formidable force soon assembled there. Verbena mages from the hills joined with the un-Awakened clergy and their Celestial Chorus brethren, and changelings and spirits converged on the site. The abbey was a special place, a sacred space whose power transcended lines of religion (despite the efforts of some of the clergy who dwelled within). But shortly before the arrival of the king's soldiers, Abbot Richard Whitting, one of the many assembled, whose life's work was dedicated to the teachings of Christ, addressed the crowd. Though he saw only the mortal seemings of those before him, he recognized both familiar and unfamiliar faces in the crowd. He was deeply moved by their devotion, but he knew that no good could come of opposing the king's wishes. Retribution was not theirs to mete out, he insisted.

Reluctantly, the crowd dispersed, watching in silence as the company of foot soldiers stormed the ancient place. And the abbot was drawn, quartered and hanged atop the Tor. Though they did not interfere, many of those who had gathered that day vowed that they would never allow pain such as this to mar the spirit of the land again. And if the soldiers had some trouble burning the place down, surely they blamed their ill luck on the evil spirits and fairies of the place. Perhaps they said the same for the indistinct shadows that haunted them at the edge of their vision for weeks and months to come. And if many among that company died within a year of their experience in Glastonbury, surely that was not unusual for soldiers in those days.

Scrumpy Dog

Woodpecker? Merrydown? You drink that stuff? It's sacrilege to call that watered down piss cider. Here, draw this fellow a pint of good Summerlands scrumpy. Now, that lets you know you're drinking, that does.

— Norman Lound, troll grump

A longtime favorite of locals and tourists alike, Scrumpy Dog is one of the most convivial pubs in the West Country. Though its vegetarian dishes and whole-grain baked goods are always in demand, a local cocktail known as "Hair of the Dog" has become legendary. Reportedly a mixture of the potent local apple brandy, cloves and a splash of cream, it goes down smooth but packs a real punch. The local ciders and scrumpy are on tap for the more timid of heart.

A mug of lentil stew or loaf of freshly baked bread with honey butter seems to take the chill off even the coldest winter evening, and the bread pudding with wild strawberry sauce served in sum-

mer is known throughout the Isles. Members of Bride's Lodge are sometimes seen relaxing here at the end of the day, and will often engage interested travelers in discussions of the local legends.

On some weekend evenings, local bands play here; the performances are usually acoustic, though exceptions have been made under certain circumstances, provided the music is of a traditional sort. Even those more used to the sounds of techno and tribal beats often find the music here to be to their liking. Other nights are given over to poetry and "spoken word" concerts, or simply good conversation over a mug of cider.

The Glastonbury Compact

One of the most celebrated alliances between mages and fae in the history of the Isle took place in Glastonbury. Though it happened many centuries ago, bards still tell the story of the battle between the undead sorceress Meerlinda and the legions of fae and mages who fought to protect the land they loved.

Meerlinda was one of the Inner Circle who followed Tremere into undeath, and the first assigned to "oversee" the British Isles on behalf of her clan. Her early sortées in the southeast and Londinium were easily rebuffed by the Ventrue, who had already established themselves as the sole rulers of those areas. Under pressure from Tremere and the Inner Circle to establish at least one base of power, she chanced upon information about the West Country village of Glastonbury. It was located a good distance from any Ventrue-held city, and was not far from a bay on the western coast of the island, providing easy transportation to and from the Continent. Most enticing, though, were the legends of the area's ties to blood magic. Various reports told of stones that fed on blood, an ancient chalice that flowed with the blood of ancient sorcerers, and a well of blood that sprang from where the Holy Grail itself was supposedly buried. Other documents told of sleeping dragons, rivers of Quintessence lying just below the surface, and other even more fantastical tales that Meerlinda was hesitant to credit. But surely, even if most of these tales were the invention of storytellers and charlatans, there must be some truth to them. So many legends centering on a single place merited at least a visit.

After investigating the place with a small escort party, Meerlinda decided that she had found the ideal place for her new base of operations. She returned to Vienna to prepare the invasion force, certain that a new Chantry would establish her place in the hierarchy of the clan.

Her plans had been observed by a sluagh who made his home in the marshes outside Glastonbury, and he quickly reported back to Megan, guardian of Bride's Hall, that something was amiss. That same night, a vision appeared to one of the novices at the abbey. Some credit one of the wraiths fettered to the area with the vision, while others believe it was a divine revelation from the One of what lay ahead. A woman with the fangs of a beast, bathed in blood, spread her cloak over the abbey. The novice believed the vision to have been sent to test his faith. He dutifully told the abbot, who in turn consulted with several of the monks known to have a gift for foresight. They reached the same conclusion as Megan and her fae allies: An undead army was about to descend on Glastonbury.

Both sides rallied their forces, but each feared it would be unable to mount a sufficient defense. This was proven quickly, as the first wave of Meerlinda's attack began. Misshapen beasts made of stone were seen in the wood outside the town, and they soon terrorized the townsfolk. Weapons seemed to have little effect on the beasts, and the town's defenders feared that the end was near. Megan sent messengers on fae steeds to every nearby glade and palace, while those at the abbey who were familiar with the supernatural arts reluctantly made contact with a coven of witches nearby. Even the spirits of the land and the dead still tied to the land rallied together. Within three nights time, two hastily assembled armies waited for the next attack from Meerlinda's gargoyles... but the night remained still. Meerlinda had received word that the town was attempting to mount a defense, which she knew would disintegrate in a fortnight or less if no enemy presented itself. The undead sorceress was nothing if not patient, so she waited with her forces in a cave outside the nearby village of Wells for the defenders to disband.

As she predicted, both the fae and the united Church and mages soon grew uneasy. Many of them had come to Glastonbury from far away, yet the supposed danger was nowhere to be found. Before long, the assembled forces dispersed.

In desperation, one of the witches (a proto-Verbena) from the area appealed to the leaders of both sides to meet and form a united force. After some hesitation, representatives of both the abbey and the fae met atop the Tor at twilight, where they resolved to ally their forces to drive out the undead sorceress and her minions. United, the two groups plotted their attack through the long night, and just before dawn attacked Meerlinda's encampment. Though the undead attempted to flee by sinking into the ground, most were stopped and staked as the first rays of dawn spilled into the cave. Meerlinda herself escaped, but her hopes of taking Glastonbury were forever dashed.

The undead sorceress continued to try to establish a permanent base of operations in Britain for several centuries, with mixed results. Eventually her clan placed her in charge of the New World, where she fared somewhat better.

Though the alliance between mages and fae was never as strong once the threat was removed. Ties between the two groups in the West Country have remained cordial to this day.

Bride's Lodge

I stand by the decisions I make, and I hold no one else responsible. I have seen countries rise and fall, and still the flame here burns. Call me what you will, but this flame will remain when your name is nothing but dust on the wind. Enough with the threats now...do you like gingerbread?

— Megan, boggan Síocháin

Just west of Glastonbury on the banks of a river lies yet another hill, this one called Bride's Mound by locals. Once the site of a shrine to St. Brigid, and before that, the goddess Brigid, few pilgrims visit this site in modern times. Near the foot of Bride's Mound sits a three-story house with a small patch of garden outside, at 19 Bride's Lane. The garden itself is overgrown, with wildflowers and herbs growing over the stone path to the house and creeping over the fence toward the street. Few people give the place a second glance, for only a scant few know the secret of what lies within.

Those who see past the mundane seeming of the house witness a riot of color in the front garden, where red and gold blossoms light up the yard. One of the back bedroom windows holds a multicolored psychedelic chimerical lava lamp, jokingly referred to by locals as "the grail-shaped beacon."

The house is one of the most ancient freeholds in all of Albion. It consists of a dozen or so small bedchambers (mostly on the second and third stories), a kitchen, bath and a large meeting room at the center. Though over the years much has changed about the house, one thing remains the same: the hearth. The focal point of the main room is a large stone hearth, where the Great Balefire of Albion has burned since time immemorial. From each generation, 18 maidens are chosen to tend the flame. Not all the maidens are Kithain; over the years, many kinain and mortal mages have watched over the flame, as well as several Garou of the Fianna tribe. At any given time, usually only three to nine of the women are present; the rest only return for festivals or in times of great need.

Currently, overseeing the work of these women is a boggan wilder named Megan. Although she appears to be in her early twenties, she has appeared that way for longer than anyone can remember, for Megan is Síocháin — a changeling who has achieved immortality. Born prior to the Shattering, she was one of the fae who successfully took on a mortal seeming to fend off the ravages of Banality. Though her appearance changes from time to time (mainly to allay the suspicions of her mortal neighbors), her sparkling brown eyes always remain the same.

Megan is a kindly woman, always ready with a cup of tea or a plate of hot scones or fresh gingerbread for fellow Kithain weary from their travels. She remains active in the community, writing articles for local newspapers under a *nom de plume*, working with local ecology groups and even occasionally speaking at interfaith services held in the ruins of the old abbey. Megan travels frequently, bringing news from freeholds on the continent and all across the Isle to the most far-flung Kithain outposts. Many of the rulers of the kingdoms of Albion (including, some whisper, Albion himself) have spent time under Megan's fosterage in the past, and her influence has helped to avert border skirmishes and all-out wars more than once.

Tourism vs. Talecraft

It can't be denied that the best tales have lives of their own, and that the reaction they spark in listeners is often wondrous to behold. The excitement stirred up by a good story is often rekindled when the hearer realizes that he can actually go to the place where the story took place. And so every year, countless millions visit the homes of Shakespeare and Wordsworth, Stonehenge, the Tower of London and dozens of other places that have stirred the imagination. But the division caused by this tourism in fae society is often sharp, as those who want to share the wonder of these magical places with others debate with those who want to preserve the ancient mysteries for future dreamers.

Both sides can point to spectacular failures on the parts of the opposing sides. Those favoring tourism use the hundreds of crumbling castles and historical sites around the country, falling apart because their owners lack the funds to maintain them. Those on the opposing side point to monstrosities such as the King Arthur Caravan Park at Tintagel, and the guards patrolling Stonehenge as examples of the other extreme. People travel from all over the world come to see Britain's ancient places... and sadly, many of them are disappointed. These ancient places don't seem as big or impressive to many people in person as they do in the mind's eye; "they're just a bunch of rocks," is unfortunately a frequent comment of blockheads and Sleepers upon seeing Stonehenge.

This argument will no doubt continue on for as long as there are places that inspire dreamers. Should such places be made public so that they may inspire more people, or should they be protected and hidden away, to better preserve their mystery? Either way, someone will feel betrayed.

More than a dozen trods converge on the fields and woods surrounding the house, and the trod to Tara-nar actually opens in the center of the front vegetable patch. Only those freeholds sustained by balefire connect to Bride's Hall via trods; most of those freeholds that draw their power from standing stones date back to the same time that Bride's Hall was founded. The trods are seldom used, though; as their purpose is to insure that extinguished balefires are rekindled as quickly as possible.

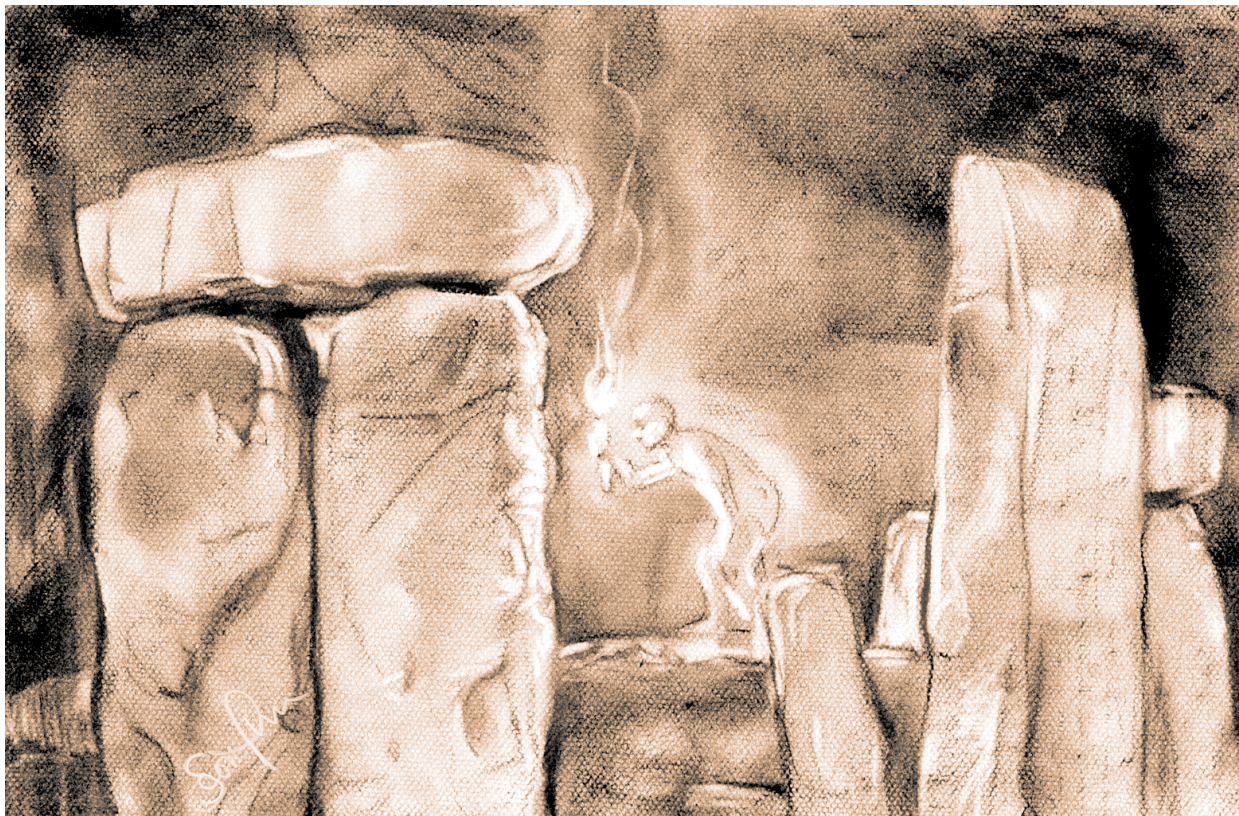
Stonehenge

"In the past century, the circle has become tainted. The materialism and avarice that resonate there are just mind-boggling, even to me."

"Y'know, that explains a lot about Doissetep."

— overheard at a pub in Salisbury

Just outside the cathedral city of Salisbury lies the most famous stone circle of them all, Stonehenge. Though the Wyck are said to have drawn power from this ancient Node long before the bluestone menhirs were erected, today there is little trace of their passing, save in the paperbacks telling of the "ancient blood sacrifices."



Gift shops hawking postcards and plastic bluestone keychains now mark the site where ancient fae revels were held, and books explaining the “real meaning” of the stones tempt Sleepers with both fantastic and utterly rational explanations for the origin of the stones. Still, the bleak, sheep-dotted plain disappoints many a tourist after the long coach ride from Salisbury, Bath or London.

The stones still mark the passing of the seasons, and some claim that when the stars are right you can still sense the soundless thrum of energy coursing through the ground. But fences, highways, tour busses and *National Lampoon's European Vacation* have driven away the spirits that once gathered near the stones. Many of the local Verbenas are still fuming over the demonstrations staged by well-meaning Sleepers (or were they perhaps Dauntains?) over a decade ago that led the government to rope off the area and patrol it closely during the Changing Days. The twin shadows of Banality and greed hang heavily over Salisbury Plain, and few visitors sense the tremendous magic (or the magick) that lies beneath the surface, fueling the horizon realm of Doissetep.

Avebury

Circles and lines. It's so simple, and yet so true. Everything is made up of the intersections of circles and lines. Here, more than anywhere else, you can feel the truth of it, not just with your mind but with your soul.

— Elizabeth Davison-Smith, Order of Hermes

For some reason, Avebury hasn't attracted the flocks of tourists that her sister circle of Stonehenge has. Both are located

not far from Salisbury. Both are sites of tremendous magickal and historical importance. Both have been the sites of moots, revels and rituals, but Avebury remains relatively unknown while plastic Stonehenge sno-globes can be found in shops for miles around. Admittedly, Avebury lacks the majestic “hanging stones” of Stonehenge, but the circle itself extends far beyond that on Salisbury Plain.

While the “power” lying just below the surface at Avebury might not be equal to that of Stonehenge, it is comparatively untainted by disbelief, disappointment and development. Here, local Kithain still gather to talk, stargaze and mark the turning of the seasons, and tell to tales of days long past.

The Kingdom of Smoke

*You have your work and nothing more
You are possessed — what is your demon?
You've never been this way before
You've lost the fire you built your dream on
There's something strange, there's something wrong
I see a change... it's like when love dies
I who have known you for so long
I see the pain in your eyes*

— Leslie Bricusse, *His Work and Nothing More*

Every schoolboy learns that the Midlands of England were the birthplace of the Industrial Revolution, and the history of the area is written in its smog-encrusted buildings and churches. Once burning with the fires of inspiration as well as coal, the Kingdom of Smoke has in recent years tried to reclaim its heritage of song, color and light. Though not the most pastoral or picturesque part of England, it has its moments.

In the days when the region was known as the Kingdom of Wool, it was one of the largest and most powerful of all the fae kingdoms in Britain. Queen Carena's reign was a golden age, and her court was known to be one of intrigue and pageantry. But when her reign ended at the Battle of Grimsfen Tor, it seemed that the age of fetes and festivals had come to an end. Over the next four-and-a-half centuries, a half-dozen different rulers came and went in the Woolenlands, none of whom seemed able to rouse the people to the joy they had known in years past.

Moreso than any other area in England, the Kingdom of Smoke shows how closely tied the people and the land remain. Nockers now hold sway over the Smokelands, as they have done for several centuries, but every day the Dauntain gain a stronger hold on the place. Like the nocker's creations, the industries that have grown up here in the English Midlands have brought progress, convenience and modern technology to even the common folk, but at a price. The flaws that at first seemed so minor — like pollution — have forever scarred the land and its people. The skies are gray even as spring dawns over the cities, and more and more Autumn People appear each year, drawn by secure jobs and a comfortable (if drab and boring) middle-class lifestyle.

But the Kingdom of Smoke is not all cities and pollution. Some of the most influential musicians of the 20th century have their roots in the Smokelands, and in fact, one of the most popular park areas in the Isles can be found smack in the middle of the region: the Peak District. While much of it is overrun with tourists and day trippers seeking time away from the cities, some of the local Kithain (with help from many ecologically-minded kinain and other mortals) have managed to keep the old traditions alive. Recently, through the efforts of a number of local folk (including Verbena adept Diana Beals), a large area of the Kingdoms of Smoke and Heather has been set aside to be protected from further development. While naysayers claim this only forestalls the inevitable, it will keep the land safe for at least a few more generations to enjoy. The more people who have a chance to form a true personal connection to the land they call their home, the better the chances of staving off the detrimental effects of development.

In particular, the tradition of "well-dressing," observed each summer in the Peak District, serves to maintain the ties between the people and the land. The tradition is to decorate clay slabs with the petals of wildflowers near each of the principal wells, to give thanks for another year of water. While the tradition itself can be traced back to ancient pagan rites, it also has the effect of replenishing the supply of Glamour in the area. As each person forms a unique pattern of petals; he infuses his creation with some of his own creative energy.

The Smokelands Monarchy

We've problems enough, to be sure, but none of us here is a quitter. There's no reason you can't have industry and art in the same place, so long as you keep a rein on things. I'm not saying it's the easiest thing in the world, but it can be done. And if it can be done here, there's no excuse why it can't be done elsewhere. Just you wait and see, in a decade or less we'll have this place shaped up so you won't hardly recognize it.

— King Davey Wheelwright

The rulership of the Kingdom of Smoke has remained solidly in the hands of a series of nockers for several hundred years. The latest of that line, a wilder named Davey Wheelwright, is known for his brilliant (if complex) attacks on Dauntain strongholds throughout the region. His critics (and there are many) claim that if he spent more time looking after the people of his kingdom and less time building chimerical siege engines and the like, he would be better off. Thankfully, he has of late been taking a great deal of advice from Lady Ellyndil of the Principality of Tears, and her influence has helped to keep Davey focused on the needs of his people.

Some have warned that the nobility in Nottingham could become a problem; though he seems charming enough, Lord Greenlance is said to have ties with the Shadow Court. Still, as long as Nottingham stays quiet, Wheelwright is unlikely to take any action against it. He has more than enough on his mind already....

A New Threat

Lord Wheelwright's rediscovered knack for leadership comes not a moment too soon. The problems with the Dauntain show no signs of abating and a new menace has begun plaguing the countryside in the Kingdom of Smoke. Recently, sightings have been reported of an enormous chimerical copper-colored beast with the head and wings of an eagle grafted onto the body of a lion. Its savage attacks on several rural motleys have caused widespread panic throughout the kingdom. Lord Wheelwright offered a boon to anyone who could provide information leading to the capture or death of this beast. Less than a day later he received word from the household of Lord and Lady Greenlance of Nottingham. The household's records spoke of just such a creature, supposedly summoned by a great ruler to attack the kingdoms of southern Caledonia centuries ago. It is believed to have perished, or to have pursued its quarry beyond the lands of men, perhaps into what mages refer to as a Horizon Realm.

Wherever it disappeared to for all those years, it is back, and it appears bent on destroying any Kithain whom it comes in contact with. Those who have faced it say its keening wail chills mortals though they can not see it, and can pierce the hearts of any Kithain who hear it with an icy cold that even Glamour can not ward off. Lady Greenlance has postulated that the creature may have been a chimera, which, after centuries of frustration and loneliness, has become banal. Whatever its nature, Lord Wheelwright has reportedly offered a sizable reward to anyone who can slay this beast.

The Albion Well

*When one hand guides the way
When the land and the people are one
When the Three are restored to power
Then shall the War of Dreams be won*

— ancient riddle from the Kingdom of Wool

One of the wells in the area is seldom seen by the hikers who pass by, though in years past many a traveler stopped to drink from its crystal depths. Located only a few miles from the Manchester city limits lies a glade, overlooked by all save those who know the way. Some of the area's changelings are unaware of the location of this natural glade, though even the youngest childlings have heard tales about it. With help from the local Verbena coven, the Kithain who guard the well have planted berry bushes and thorny hedges around the glade's perimeter, leaving only a small break in a shadowy corner to admit visitors. The way to the glade has become a maze of twisting passages and dead ends, and those mortals who do try to make their way inside often find themselves outside again, their sense of direction scrambled by the guardian's cantrips and magicks. Any who know the way note that the air here remains cool year round, both at the height of summer heat and on the coldest days of winter. The air is moist, and smells of earth and water. A lush emerald moss covers the ground, and the light that filters through the trees is soft and shadowy.

The well itself lies at the northern side of a small pool, surrounded by mossy stones. The rocks that make up the walls of the well are smooth, worn by centuries of weather. Still, it is easy to see that whoever crafted the stones so many generations ago was a master stonemason; each of the stones has been carved to fit into the other stones around it in a twisting pattern, not unlike a jigsaw puzzle. A small roof supported by four stone pillars shelters the well from falling leaves and debris, and a silver chain descends into the darkness from an ancient winch, presumably for fetching water.

The future of the well has come into question. The local changelings who have looked after it for so long are sharply divided as to what should be done at this point. Rumors have been circulating that officials in the Manchester municipal government are in favor of building a city reservoir, which would be fed primarily by the well. Pipes, concrete and chain-link fences would soon surround the glade, and no amount of Glamour is likely to dissuade the highly banal bureaucrats from having their way. Mundane attempts to dissuade the city's officials have all met with failure, and many fear that Dauntain or the Technocracy (or both) may be behind the motives of the officials.

The well's guardians are faced with a dilemma: continue to fight to protect the well, or try something more drastic. One faction of Kithain has made tentative plans with a local Verbena coven, led by Dalen Groveton, to attempt to move the glade into a Horizon Realm, at least temporarily. To do so would be extremely difficult, but as some are quick to point out, it may be the only means of saving the well.

Others among the well's wardens argue that to do so wouldn't be saving the well at all; its purpose is to serve as a connecting point between the people and the land, as well as to tie Albion to the whole of Great Britain. While moving the well to another plane

might keep it from being destroyed by municipal developers, it would remove the well from the place it is most needed. Still, those who oppose moving the well have not come up with any better plan to stop the developers, and the two groups seem to be at a stalemate.

Birmingham

*For never-resting time leads summer on
To hideous winter and confounds him there,
Sap check'd with frost and lusty leaves quite gone,
Beauty o'ersnow'd and bareness everywhere.*

— William Shakespeare, *Sonnet 5*

Birmingham stands as one of the Technocracy's most shining achievements. The character of the city is immediately evident from the moment its 1960s-era concrete towers come into view. After the devastation wrought on the city by World War II, it was practically rebuilt from scratch. Few of the old buildings survived; most of those that did were scrapped anyway in the succeeding decades to make room for ultramodern conference centers and office buildings.

Though a few nightclubs burn through the nightly haze, Birmingham is a shining testament to the encroaching Winter. An "art" museum, better known for its stunning collection of preserved insects than for the dusty canvases dotting its walls, is the only bright spot in this city, which is otherwise described by Lord Wheelwright as a festering sore of Banality on the face of the land. Few Kithain stay long in Birmingham, leaving its neatly manicured hedges and identical gray buildings to the Technocrats, who seem to thrive here.

Outposts of nearly all the Conventions are stationed in the city center, connected by a warren of tunnels the likes of which would drive a slugh mad with envy (save for the fact that they are brightly lit and cleaned nightly by sweeperbots). While labs and other research centers can be found, many of the outpost's staff are devoted to "citizen education", producing articles on the "Power of Science" for local and national newspapers, writing textbooks for schools, and producing anesthetizing documentaries for the BBC on modern technology.

Bourneville

Control through confections. You know, that has a nice ring to it.

— James Bergeron, 19th-century Harbinger of Avalon

Just outside the city limits lies one of the first "corporate lifestyle" experiments: Bourneville. Natives to Britain will recognize the name as that of a popular chocolate bar, produced by the Cadbury company. Long before Disney World set the stage for corporate principalities in Concordia, Bourneville was developed as a new concept in factory towns: an entire self-contained community for factory workers (and later, corporate executives) at the local Cadbury plant. A 20th century innovation, perhaps the result of post-war development? No. Bourneville dates back to the height of Victoria's reign.

Although many among the Traditions and the Kithain have long suspected something was not right in Bourneville, efforts to discover anything truly nefarious have come up empty. The people who live and work there seem to be content and happy workers, willingly devoting every waking hour to the company or one of its

approved recreational projects. Are these people who genuinely find the element of conformity comforting, or is there some darker purpose behind this self-contained corporate community?

Manchester

I've heard this place called the City of Darkness, and sometimes it seems a fitting-enough name. But don't think for a moment that just because it's dark, it's quiet. London's got nothing on us for new music, and the raves here make Brighton's look like garden parties.

— Jake Carmine, wilder redcap

Manchester is one of the UK's most active university towns, and one of the ugliest. Concrete and a century and a half of pollution have washed most of the city in a dull gray film that seems to permeate everything. Scholars among the sidhe have found that Manchester has the highest percentage of Autumn People of any city in Albion, and Dauntain seem to be found more frequently here as well.

The city does have a fairly active nightclub scene, though even that seems to be more of a temporary distraction from dismal day-to-day life, rather than the celebration it seems to be at clubs in London and Edinburgh. Many of England's most popular punk and heavy-metal bands have started in Manchester. While many young people enjoy the post-modern Gothic atmosphere of the place, the city seems to dampen even the brightest spirits after a few months. Though not seen by most Kithain as a "lost cause" in the same manner as Liverpool, Manchester is more popular with sluagh and the occasional eshu than any other kith.

Tapestry

No, we don't serve beer here. We have something better. Cafeine. Tea. Coffee. Sweets. Vitamins. See that bloke over there? Two weeks he's been going on tea and vitamins, with a piece of marmite toast on Sundays.

— Rodney Haversham, Virtual Adept

Recently rebuilt after a fire, Tapestry is known among truly elite programmers and webslingers as the place to meet in realtime. The place itself has existed in cyberspace in one form or another since 1991, bouncing around various systems, MUSHes and sites until longtime bartender Rodney Haversham resolved to give it a permanent home. Although at the time everyone assumed he simply meant that he would provide a stable site to house the cafe online, a few months later Tapestry opened in Manchester; a coffeehouse and cybercafe without equal.

Although business was slow to catch on at first, word spread quickly through the local and international online communities. Soon everyone who was anyone had heard about it, but to Rodney's surprise, business remained slow. Some of those who did come to the grand opening confessed that the notion of meeting (or "meat"ing in the flesh) with people was a little disturbing; the anonymity of the net brought otherwise antisocial people out of their shells, and the thought of actually socializing sends many of them scurrying for cover. But after a while, the notion caught on, and once several of the area's Virtual Adepts adopted the place as their hangout, business seemed to pick up. The chocolate-covered espresso beans have proved to be one of

the hottest sellers, and the place has begun attracting a broad spectrum of patrons, from local university students to several pooka childlings who have just discovered the joys of hacking.

Nottingham

That Greenlance is a charmer for certain, even if his wife is a horrid tart. I heard she and Lady Ellindyl had quite a row some time back. So what if he's Unseelie. Takes all types, doesn't it?

— overheard at a gathering of boggans

Fabled homeland of Robin Hood and his merry men, the once-verdant Sherwood Forest is now thinned and bare. Like Stonehenge and Tintagel, Nottingham is dominated today by Robin Hood Auto Repair Shops and Maid Marion Beauty Salons, as eager businesses try to capitalize on the magic of local legend to boost sales. The recently appointed chairman of the Nottingham Tourism Bureau is in fact a changeling who has forgotten his fae self, and has become one of the Dauntain. Some believe it was dispair at seeing the once-beautiful countryside replaced by factories, others say that his love for a woman chilled by Autumn froze his seeming. It is partly due to his influence that so many businesses have jumped on the Robin Hood bandwagon. By doing so, the power of the tale is diminished. The heroic characters become associated with fish-and-chip shops and vacuum cleaners more than with legendary deeds, and the power of their story is trivialized.

The Shire of Nottingham has been under control of the Kithain Greenlance dynasty since the 15th century, and its private library remains one of the best-kept secrets in the Kingdom of Smoke. Though the first Greenlances were commoners, today two of the most cultured sidhe in the kingdom control the shire. More often than not, the lords of Nottingham have been of an Unseelie bent, though they have often remained willing to help out any other Kithain who sought their assistance (and who were willing to repay them in kind). Boggan and sluagh gossip at Lord Wheelwright's court indicates that the current Lord Greenlance is in fact a member of the Shadow Court, but Wheelwright has his mind on other matters and pays the whisperers little heed.

The gossips have only half the story. Lord Greenlance is indeed a member of the Shadow Court, with allegiance to House Allil. His wife, whom most believe to be of House Fiona, is actually a satyr with ties to House Leannan. Their villa is littered with half-finished paintings and sculptures, the works of Lady Greenlance's "wards." The two have found the Kingdom of Smoke very much to their liking, and are currently biding their time before making a bid to remove Lord Wheelwright from power. Their only fear is a reprisal from Wheelwright's allies to the north. Still, if the griffin continues its rampage, it is unlikely that the northerners will have the resources to stand in their way.

Liverpool

Best known now as the birthplace of the Beatles, Liverpool was once the launching point for travelers headed to the New World. Outcasts, profiteers and bold adventurers set out from Liverpool, Portsmouth and countless other towns along England's south and west shores with hopes for a new start (and just maybe

The Copper Griffin

This banal chimera was created in the days of King Albion as an assassin against the queen of the Kingdom of Three Hills in Caledonia. As his victim escaped on a trod, the griffin tried to follow her. But along the way, he ran afoul of a Verbena coven (perhaps the ill-fated Harrowgate coven, later to meet with General Christopher Wyndgarde), which consigned him to a Horizon Realm, that he, like many other chimera and mythic beasts native to Britain, might be preserved. No one knows how or why he made his way back to this world (or if any other beasts escaped with him), but since his arrival he has been doing his best to lay waste to any freehold or motley he comes across.

Attributes: Strength 8, Dexterity 5, Stamina 4, Charisma 2, Manipulation 0, Appearance 4, Perception 3, Intelligence 1, Wits 4

Abilities: Alertness 4, Athletics 3, Brawl 4, Dodge 5, Intimidation 4

Glamour: 8, **Willpower:** 3, **Banality:** 3

Health Levels: OK, OK, OK, OK, -1, -1, -3, -3, -5, dead

Attack: Claws/ 6 dice, Beak/ 8 dice

Powers:

- Flight

The griffin has the power of flight, which it uses quite effectively, both as a means of attack, and if necessary, escape.

a fortune as well). In the years that followed, the shipping trade kept the city invigorated with a constant stream of travelers and entrepreneurs... until the world wars. The bombs of the two world wars hit the Smokelands hard, but the increasing dependence on airplanes for transporting both people and freight eventually left Liverpool without a purpose, and fewer dreamers were drawn to her bleak shores. Those who stayed lost themselves in the day-to-day routine of work, and Autumn descended hard on the people and the land.

Those who have struggled to shake off the Banality of the place have generally fared very well, or not at all. The Beatles are the most well-known example of this, though several other local bands, artists and writers have also gone on to become popular.

Few Kithain stay long in Liverpool or its sister city, the aptly named Blackpool. Those who do reside here face down the Dauntain and Autumn People with a wry wit and a love of the land that no amount of Banality can crush.

The Kingdom of Heather

It's a lovely part of the island we live in, and that's the truth. Peaceful as the day is long, most times, and history stretching back longer than you Colonial lot can fathom. But we're one place that's not going to sit with our heads buried in the past. There's a lot going on up here in the North Country. Folks who can show you the beauty



in ordinary things, like that James Herriot fellow. Or that bass-player fellow from Newcastle, Gordon somethingorother. I always liked his music, especially the one about the beastie in the "dark Scottish loch..."

— King Lawrence Ormond

Also known as the North Country, this stretch of land borders the Lakes Country along the eastern shore as far as Hadrian's Wall and the Tyne River, which form the traditional border between the Kithain of England and Scotland. While the two countries in the mortal world have had (and continue to have) disputes the kith in this region have, for the most part, existed peacefully for centuries.

During the 1500s, the Kingdom of Tears was partitioned off from the rest of the kingdom. Though the two have been reunited now for close to a century, the Lakes retain their own rulership, and in turn owe fealty to the sovereign of the Heatherlands.

The current ruler of the Kingdom of Heather is a troll, Lawrence Ormond. Though he has ruled well for more than 20 years, many fear that he is beginning to feel the chill of Banality, for his heart has been captured by the Autumn. The responsibilities he bears are many; in addition to overseeing the Kingdom of Heather, Lawrence is married to a dashing young lady barrister from York...who knows nothing of his fae life. The two are very much in love, but Rebecca is beginning to worry that Lawrence has been unfaithful to her. Lawrence knows that the honorable thing to do would be to explain to her why he is often called away for days at a time... but sadly, she would be more likely to believe any lie than the truth. For although she loves him deeply, no amount of Glamour or enchantment has been able to break the spell that the mundane world has cast upon her. Though there was a time in her life when she might have believed in invisible castles and faery steeds, she left all that behind in her struggle to be taken seriously in the highly chauvinistic world of the British law courts. Lady Ellyndil has advised him that perhaps the best thing to do would be to let her go, but Lord Ormond will not consider it.

York

Spent some time down in York over the winter a few years back, and I have to say that the ghosts there are just as stubborn as the people. Rather than finish up their business and be on their way, they cling to the walls like so much moss. Drones, they call some of them, marching off to war and back again every day, or doing their wash down by the riverside. Clifford's Tower is the worst, though... that's where a mob killed all the Jews in town a few centuries back. Normally I'm not one to encourage spirits to stick around, but if their presence helps to keep the same thing from happening again, I suppose it all evens out in the end.

— Maggie McKenzie, Scottish Euthanatos

One of the best-preserved walled cities in England, York retains much of its ancient charm while keeping pace with the modern world. Its Arts Centre hosts local and international performing and visual artists, and the town's rich history is passed on through daytime and evening tours of the town's historical sites. Although York is notable among scholars of the spirits of the dead for the disproportionate number of ghosts who have

remained, this somber feeling does not dampen the magical feeling of the place.

One of York's most colorful Kithain is Billy, a goat pooka who spends his days and evenings giving guided tours of the city. Billy knows most of the secrets of the old city, including a good bit about the wraiths who haunt the taverns and ruins. Of course, if he occasionally embellishes a little, no one seems to mind — least of all the tourists, who keep Billy well-supplied with tips (most of which go to buying collectible card games). Accompanying Billy on most of his tours are Sachi, a young Eurasian girl with dark, laughing eyes; and Jared, a tall American fellow who wears jeans, a NIN T-shirt and an ankh. While the sluagh tends to stay out of the way when Billy is giving a tour (often scaring the wits out of the tourists when he appears out of the shadows at the end of an evening tour), Sachi shows her eshu tendencies when she occasionally tries to steal the show from Billy — no mean feat.

Whitby

Yeah, it's a tourist trap in its own way, but it's not like Graceland or anything. People over here don't usually deck out attractions in neon and loudspeakers, at least not up here they don't. I'm sure the people whose families have lived here for centuries are a little put off by all us young people in black leather and lace, but hey, you gotta change with the times. As long as no one's gnawing on cattle or draining the local schoolgirls, I don't see what they have to complain about.

— Jared, wilder sluagh

Few would dispute that Bram Stoker's most famous novel is the source of much of Whitby's tourist trade. A "Goth" festival overruns the town annually, as the normally quiet town is flooded with young people paying homage to Stoker's pale-skinned nobleman. Among them are several Hollow Ones mages, and sluagh, who come with their un-Awakened companions to soak up the dark and stormy atmosphere that still permeates the place.

The windswept cliffs outside Whitby once housed a grotto of some power, but the sacred stone was shattered more than a century ago. It seems that a number of would-be vampire hunters came to the area, drawn by local stories about the "real" Dracula. In their zeal to wipe out anything possibly connected to the fictional bloodsucker, they toppled tombstones, violated graves and destroyed anything they came across that smacked of the occult. The local clergy, at first supportive of their efforts to purge the land of any possible occult influences, were horrified to find the local cemeteries dug up by this latter-day Inquisition, and ordered it to desist activities immediately.

Sadly, one of the monuments toppled was the sacred stone of a local changeling grotto. Its almost palpable warmth and the barely audible hum it emitted on the Changing Days (solstices and equinoxes) was proof enough of demonic influence to hunters, and so after several hours of work with chisel and hammer, the stone was reduced to rubble.

While these hunters did succeed in destroying most of the benign magicks and sacred places of the place, they met their end some miles out of town in the person of several of the undead they were seeking.

The Principality of Tears

Yeah, it's the kingdom of tears alright...more self-pitying sots than you can shake a stick at up there. Sighing for the past, for lost futures, for the lack of a decent cup of tea, blah, blah blah. I've never understood what is supposed to be so "romantic" about sitting out on a muddy hillside in the drizzle, weeping after what you can't have.

— Jim Cracktimber, nocker grump

Though it is now officially a part of the Kingdom of Heather, the Principality of Tears retains its own identity and a very different mood from that of the moors and dales to the east. Bordered by the Irish Sea to the west and Morecambe Bay to the south, the principality's lakes and mountains make it unique in Albion. Once one of the most remote and unspoiled areas of England, the Lakes District has inspired poets and dreamers for countless centuries. Though many an angstful poet has mourned the injustice of it all in these hills, the kingdom draws its name from a legend about the lakes....

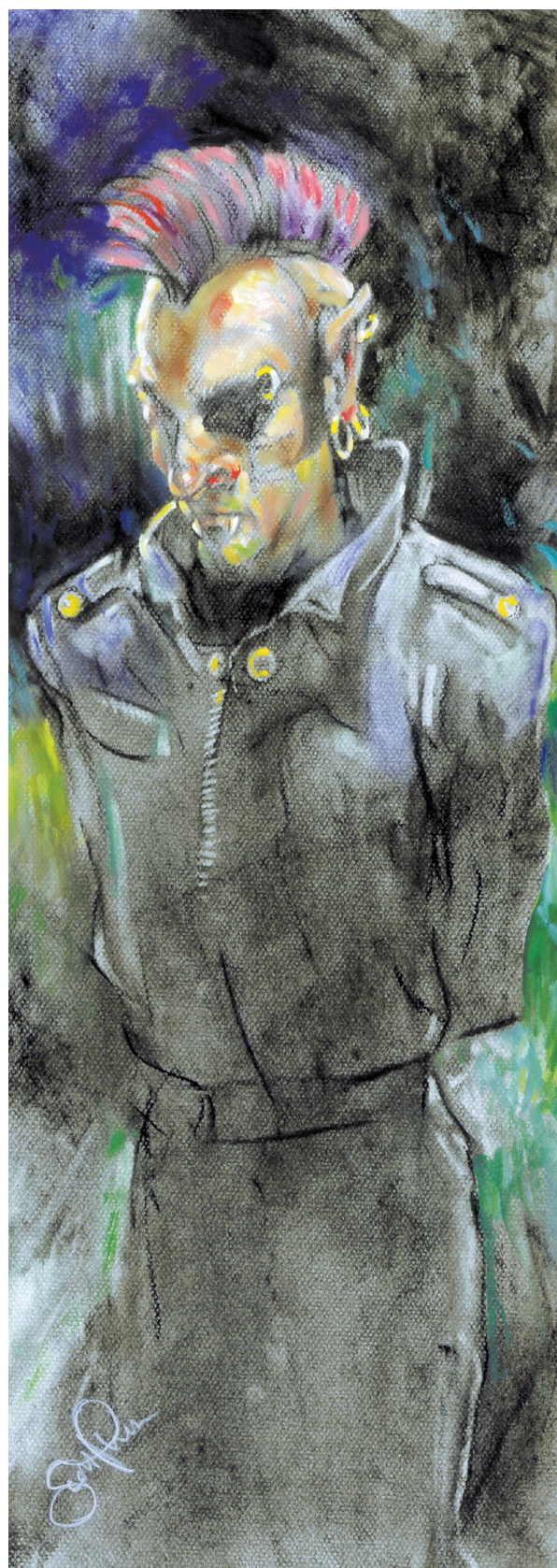
The lakes themselves are reminiscent of the lochs of Caledonia, just to the north. Like their northern counterparts, the lakes of this region tend to be long thin fingers of water, snaking their way between craggy hillsides. Lake Windermere, Coniston Water and Wastwater are among the largest and most well-known, but smaller lakes (often with less tourists and the accompanying Banality that often follows in their wake) abound.

Wyverll's Tears

It is said that in the in the days when mortals first came to the island, mythic beasts roamed the land day and night. Over time, the dragons were slain and the nightmares banished to the dark places. But those who conquered the land saw little difference between the beasts, slaying both friend and foe in blind fear. One of the most well-known of these was a dragon called Wyverll. She had fared better than many of her kin in the more settled areas, having befriended many of the local folk in the valley where she made her home.

As the time of the Shattering approached, more and more of the fae stopped visiting her cave. Some stopped by to say their good-byes before departing for Arcadia, while others simply vanished. Soon she too began to feel the cold chill spreading across the land. She spent more and more time drowsing in her cave, until the time came when she knew she would have to leave. A sorceress nearby offered to open a gateway to another world, where many of the other mythic beasts had gone. There, she could live out her days in peace, without fear of knights with glory on their minds.

As Wyverll flew over the hills and valleys where she had made her home for centuries, she wept bitterly to think that she would never see them again. She wept for the fae who had likewise been forced to leave their homeland, and for the land itself. Her tears splashed down on the hills, and the hills themselves wept to see their friend leave. Waterfalls gushed forth from the rocky green hills, and all the tears pooled into silver lakes. The dragon promised that she would hold the land in her heart to the end





of her days, and the spirits of the land replied that they would continue to weep until she returned. The lakes and waterfalls that sprung up remain to this day, though they are no longer as salty as they once were. Or so the legend goes....

Park-a-Moor

This freehold is one of the newest in Albion, having been created in the mid-'70s by Lady Ellyndil (known among her mortal protégés as Ellen Delford). It has already come to be acknowledged as an artist's colony of sorts, drawing poets and watercolorists from the surrounding region to an inn on a hill overlooking the water. The natural beauty of Conniston Water and the surrounding hills have inspired dreamers since the lakes' discovery. Through Lady Ellyndil's patronage, many gifted artists have been able to find the time and solitude they need to produce some truly wonderful pieces. Though Lady Greenlance of Nottingham has visited a few times, she and Lady Ellyndil seem to have had a tiff, and the two are no longer on speaking terms.

The unofficial court jester of Park-a-Moor is Jamie, Lady Ellyndil's ward. The young raccoon pooka's pranks are tolerated by most of the residents with a good-natured laugh, and his musical ability (or lack thereof) has led to some of the most hilarious sing-alongs the hills around Conniston Water have ever heard. Though Jamie is still a childling (and a pooka at that), he has a serious side that often puzzles newcomers. A sympathetic listener, Jamie even has the ear of Lady Ellyndil, and many expect that she will pass the freehold on to him when he is older.

Keswick

Only here for the weekend? Well, I'll do my best to show you around, but there's more to see here than you could do in a week, and that'd be pushing it. I'll bet you that after a weekend here you'll be wanting to make it a week, and then another...that's how we all wound up here, you know. This place has a way of eating wanderlust for breakfast, it does.

— Josie Finn, wilder eshu

A quaint country town when it's not overrun by tourists, Keswick lies on the shores of Derwentwater. Most travelers who come to Keswick do so for the hiking, biking and other outdoor activities (as opposed to many towns in the southern Lakes, which attract Wordsworth groupies). As in many rural towns, you'll find the people of Keswick much more personable in the off-season. The local changeling motley (consisting of chiefly eshu and satyrs) is usually willing to show strangers around, and frequently journeys down to Park-a-Moor for revels and to talk with the artists there. Though they aren't apt to bring it up, group members have formed a band of sorts. They have yet to talk to anyone at Park-a-Moor about it for fear that Jamie will want to join in, but any newcomers to the area who are willing to give their music a listen and offer constructive criticism will earn their instant respect.

Castlerigg

There are some downcountry who'll tell you Avebury is the one to see, and a few who continue to sing the praises of the bluestones in

Salisbury, but I think you'll agree that we have something quite special up here in the wilds among the lakes.

— Lady Ellendyl

On a hill a half-hours walk from Keswick lies the Castlerigg stone circle. Like many other stone circles, the stones of Castlerigg are configured in precise astronomical alignment to the spring and fall equinoxes, just as Stonehenge is to the solstices. No billboards proclaim the stones existence, and the easiest way to find them is by following a path over hills overlooking the lake.

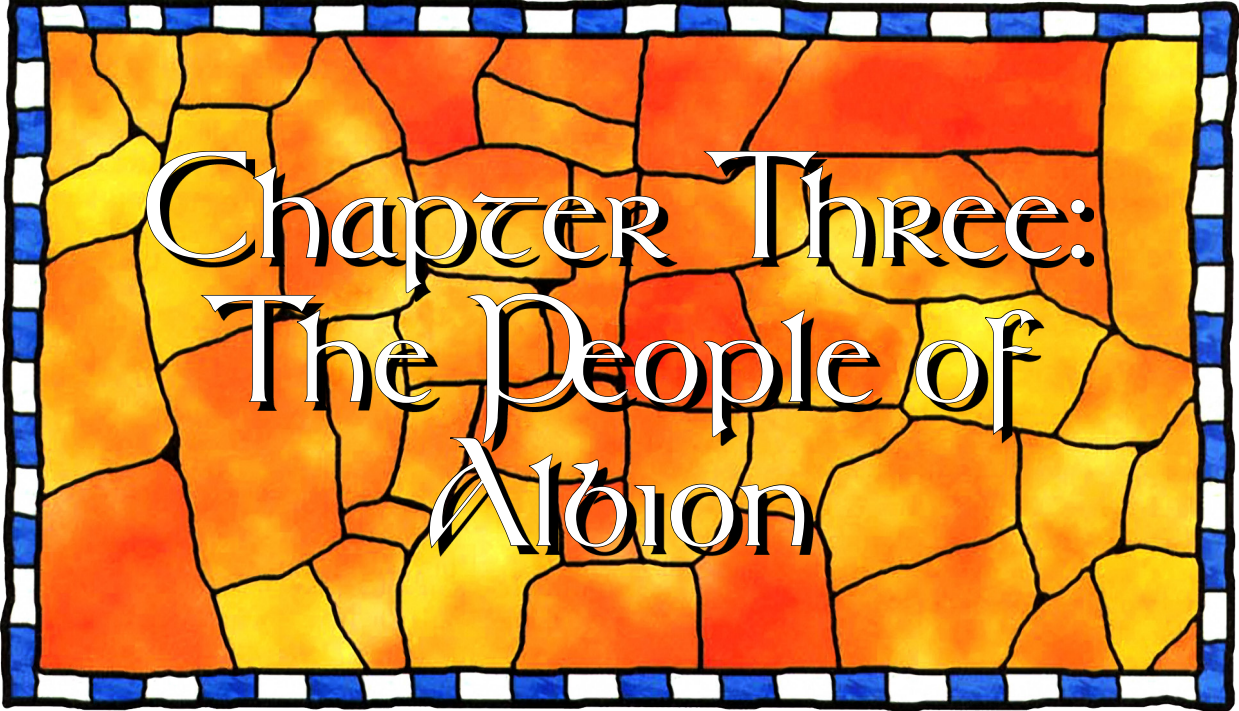
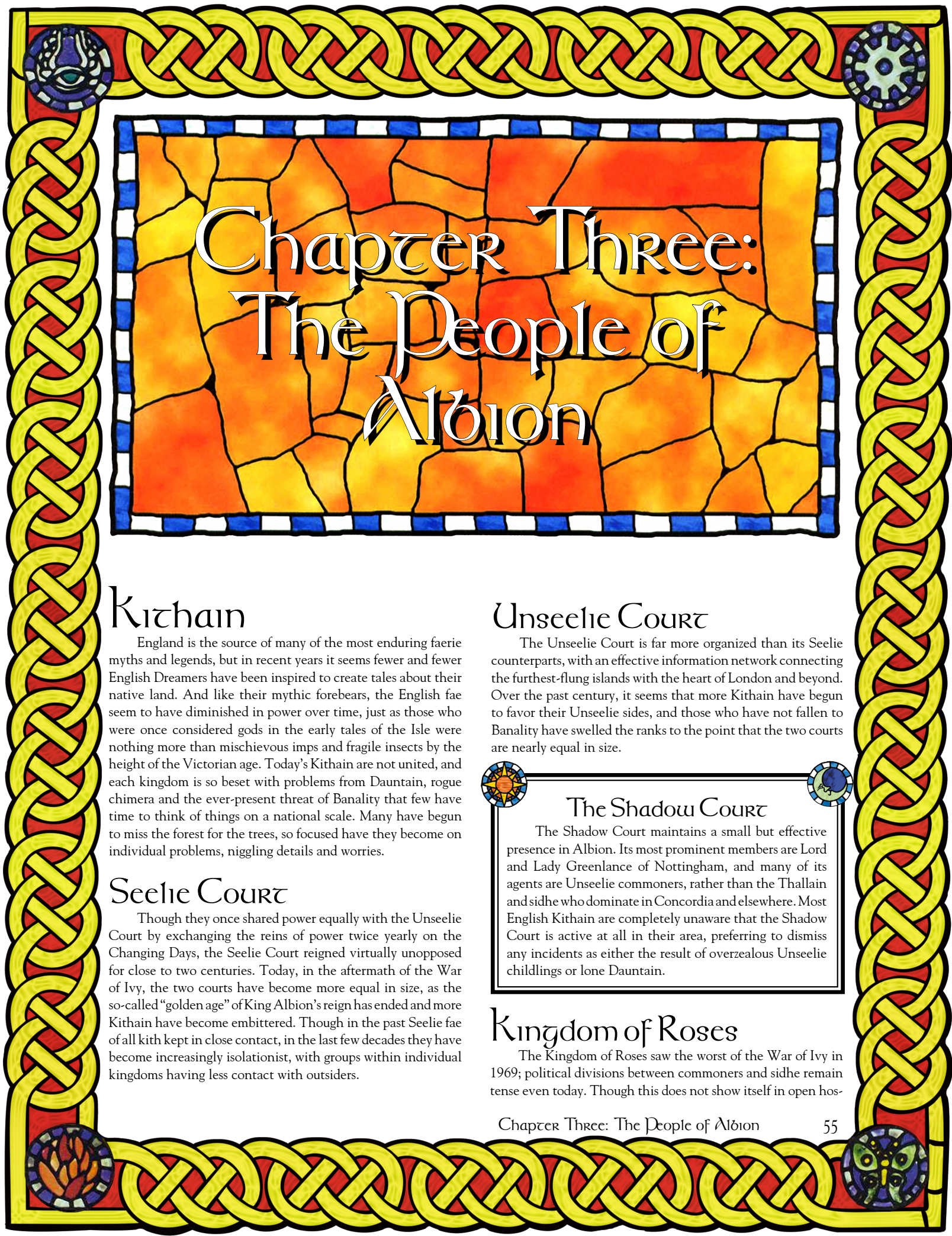
Notable as one of the most magical spots in the Isles not located on or near a major ley line, Castlerigg has remained

unsullied by the commercialism and Banality that have afflicted Stonehenge. Local Verbena as well as pagan Sleepers come to the circle periodically, but the annual revels, when the members of the Park-a-Moor household gather at Imbolg, are interesting. Usually one or two mortals come along for the revels, though the next morning they remember only dreamlike images of what transpired.

Though the spirits within the stones themselves are now sleeping, one or two can be coaxed out to share in the telling of tales under the starry February sky. Though the stone fae are notoriously shy, those who have been to the Imbolg revels say that the stories they tell in soft, low voices of times long past are truly wondrous.







Chapter Three: The People of Albion

Kithain

England is the source of many of the most enduring faerie myths and legends, but in recent years it seems fewer and fewer English Dreamers have been inspired to create tales about their native land. And like their mythic forebears, the English fae seem to have diminished in power over time, just as those who were once considered gods in the early tales of the Isle were nothing more than mischievous imps and fragile insects by the height of the Victorian age. Today's Kithain are not united, and each kingdom is so beset with problems from Dauntain, rogue chimera and the ever-present threat of Banality that few have time to think of things on a national scale. Many have begun to miss the forest for the trees, so focused have they become on individual problems, niggling details and worries.

Seelie COURT

Though they once shared power equally with the Unseelie Court by exchanging the reins of power twice yearly on the Changing Days, the Seelie Court reigned virtually unopposed for close to two centuries. Today, in the aftermath of the War of Ivy, the two courts have become more equal in size, as the so-called "golden age" of King Albion's reign has ended and more Kithain have become embittered. Though in the past Seelie fae of all kith kept in close contact, in the last few decades they have become increasingly isolationist, with groups within individual kingdoms having less contact with outsiders.

Unseelie COURT

The Unseelie Court is far more organized than its Seelie counterparts, with an effective information network connecting the furthest-flung islands with the heart of London and beyond. Over the past century, it seems that more Kithain have begun to favor their Unseelie sides, and those who have not fallen to Banality have swelled the ranks to the point that the two courts are nearly equal in size.



The Shadow COURT



The Shadow Court maintains a small but effective presence in Albion. Its most prominent members are Lord and Lady Greenlance of Nottingham, and many of its agents are Unseelie commoners, rather than the Thallain and sidhe who dominate in Concordia and elsewhere. Most English Kithain are completely unaware that the Shadow Court is active at all in their area, preferring to dismiss any incidents as either the result of overzealous Unseelie childlings or lone Dauntain.

Kingdom of Roses

The Kingdom of Roses saw the worst of the War of Ivy in 1969; political divisions between commoners and sidhe remain tense even today. Though this does not show itself in open hos-

ilities, the tone at most “mixed” gatherings is frosty, as those who gather resort to politeness and formality to ease the tension. Though Lord Edgar has asked everyone to put the past behind them, every year more sidhe move from the other kingdoms to the Roselands, and more depart from the Roselands for Concordia. In this land of tradition and ceremony, the notion of commoners controlling the reins of power is unthinkable to many sidhe.

Still, divisions within sidhe ranks have forestalled the coronation of a sidhe as king of the Roselands. The political maneuverings, formal debates and duels that have postponed the selection of a new king seem likely to continue on indefinitely, so it would seem Lord Whitestone will continue to rule into the foreseeable future.

Edgar Whitestone, The Lord Chancellor

Though he only began working for King Albion toward the end of his long reign, Edgar Whitestone quickly became one of the king’s most trusted advisors. Over his career, Edgar Whitestone’s meteoric rise brought him from soldier to knight to knight champion to war leader. But perhaps his most auspicious promotion occurred when King Albion elevated him to the position of chamberlain. As head of the king’s household, Edgar grew to have greater political influence. His loyalty to the crown never wavered, though he felt he was ill-suited to the position that had been thrust upon him.

When King Albion’s reign ended without naming an heir, it was announced that a *fior-righ* would be held to determine who would be the next ruler. Commoners and sidhe from across the land flocked to court, each claiming that he (or she) was the most worthy person for the job. A drawing was held, but it was soon revealed that one of the contestants had used Glamour to influence the outcome. Another drawing was held, and was likewise invalidated when one of the would-be rulers found reference to an ancient rule stating that the *fior-righ* could only be held on the night of a full moon. It became obvious that this charade was going to drag on indefinitely, and Edgar quietly stepped in to make sure the kingdom continued to operate effectively in the absence of a monarch, and managed to get things back on an even keel. In private conference with many of the kingdom’s lords and several of the more prominent candidates, it was decided that Edgar would serve as lord chancellor until a monarch could be chosen. It was unlikely that any could best him in a contest of arms, and he was the only person who knew the workings of the kingdom well enough to step in on such short notice.

In time, such an uproar had been caused that by consensus of the various nobles and officials of the kingdom, the royal lottery was discounted as a means of choosing the next king. Since that time, the various candidates have traversed the length of the kingdom, seeking out dragons to slay, swords to pull from stones, or anything else that could possibly grant them the respect of the nobles and the right to assume the throne.

Court: Seelie

Legacies: Regent/Fatalist

Seeming: Wilder



Kith: Troll

Physical: Strength 6, Dexterity 3, Stamina 4

Social: Charisma 3, Manipulation 4, Appearance 2

Mental: Perception 3, Intelligence 4, Wits 3

Talents: Alertness 3, Athletics 3, Brawl 3, Dodge 4, Intimidation 3

Skills: Etiquette 2, Leadership 3, Melee 5, Survival 2

Knowledges: Law 3, Linguistics 1, Politics 5

Backgrounds: Holdings 3, Resources 4, Retinue 3, Title 4, Treasures 2

Arts: Primal 4, Soothsay 2, Sovereign 5, Wayfare 4

Realms: Actor 3, Fae 3, Nature 1

Glamour: 4

Willpower: 3

Banality: 3

Treasures: Edgar possesses a chimerical great ax with an intricately etched blade. Its silver knotwork patterns seem to writhe and twist in the heat of battle. The axe grants him +1 Melee in combat, though Edgar dislikes ever having to take up arms in his current position.

Image: Lord Edgar is holding up admirably under the strain of ruling, but even so Grumpdom is creeping up on him. Mortal friends have seen the normally fit and trim Edgar looking more and more weary, and of late he has started to get a little extra padding around the waist, as a result of neglecting his fitness regimen to spend more time on the business of ruling a fractious bunch of sidhe and commoners.

In his role as Lord Chancellor of the Kingdom of Roses, Edgar has taken to wearing dark-blue silk robes, loosely belted. While it does give him the air of a druid or other holy man, his many years of combat experience have left him a formidable opponent, even unarmed. Yet, his sky-blue complexion has begun to look paler and more tired, and many fear that the stress of holding the kingdom together may claim the Lord Chancellor sooner than he thinks.

Roleplaying Hints: The world is becoming too much for you, but you know that the kingdom needs you now more than ever. If any one of those bumbling foppish sidhe who were capable of doing a good job, you'd step down in a second. But they prefer to debate and duel and complain, leaving the business of running the kingdom to you. You hope to one day find a worthy successor...or at the very least, someone who can assist you in this bloody miserable business until one of the pretty boys rises to the top of the heap.

Mary Crimson

This good-natured redcap and her brother Mick established the bar 2Right in 1990, and since then business has been steadily increasing. In a time when most of the nearby clubs catered to the "pretty people," who sipped sweet mixed drinks and tried not to look desperate for a date, 2Right was an atavistic temple of dance, rebellion and release. With help from an anonymous adult backer (who some believe to be a mage), the two were able to navigate the legalities necessary to make the club a reality.

Though Mary is in fact only 12 years old, she has an ageless quality about her that has allowed her to pass for 16 or older in the right light. It helps that she is rather tall for her age (5'6") and more physically mature than most other girls her age. But more than anything, her attitude conveys the rebelliousness and energy normally associated with teenagers. And for those occasions when a bobby tries to nab her for truancy, she has several student ID cards from universities around the city that can usually pass for authentic even without help from a cantrip.

Court: Seelie

Legacies: Troubadour/Grotesque

Seeming: Childling

Kith: Redcap

Physical: Strength 3, Dexterity 2, Stamina 4

Social: Charisma 3, Manipulation 3, Appearance 2

Mental: Perception 3, Intelligence 3, Wits 4



Talents: Alertness 3, Brawl 2, Dodge 2, Streetwise 4, Subterfuge 3

Skills: Crafts 2, Melee 2, Security 4

Knowledges: Computer 3, Law 2, Mythlore 2

Backgrounds: Contacts 2, Dreamers 2, Resources 2

Arts: Chicanery 3, Legerdemain 1, Primal 3

Realms: Actor 2, Nature 2, Prop 3

Glamour: 6

Willpower: 3

Banality: 2

Image: Mary is a sweet-faced punk with spiral-shaved, crimson-dyed locks and hazel eyes. Her favorite outfit is a worn T-shirt that's imprinted with a dictionary definition of "fuck" and the various ways it can be used in conversation, over cut-off jeans. She generally tells people that she's 17, and she's just bollocksy enough to make most people believe it.

Roleplaying Hints: You love to stir things up, and will often go out of your way to instigate trouble just to see what will happen. But you don't mean any harm by it, of course... sometimes it's just hard to get people to say what they really feel when they're being all guarded and polite. The one thing you will not tolerate is people acting phony. Play-acting is all well and good in a pantomime, but you want to be spared of it in the real world.

Lord Berwin Lindell of Oxfordshire

Though he remembers little of his life before returning here in '69, it seemed obvious from his breeding that Berwin was destined to rule. Vague images of towers beside a river brought him home to Oxford. Though many things had changed during his long exile, many of the old colleges remained the same over the centuries. How comforting it was to see familiar things amid the bicycles and tourists! And how wonderful that the commoners had kept things so well during all those years.

But how disturbing that the trollish barbarian in control of the area was unwilling to relinquish control to the land's rightful guardian! After besting the oafish wench in single combat, Lord Berwin assumed control of the local area and began acclimating himself to the modern world, even accepting a post as a history tutor at one of the colleges. Many of the local commoners were put out when Lady Garyn Garfield (whom Berwin refers to as That Woman) was deposed, and many left for the Kingdoms of Mist and Chalk. Today, Lord Berwin spends his time teaching, reading and playing an occasional game of cricket when the mood strikes him. Outsiders of sidhe extraction will find him an affable companion, though most commoners will be treated with condescension at best and outright distaste in the case of most redcaps.

Court: Seelie

Legacies: Courtier/Peacock

Seeming: Wilder

Kith: Sidhe

House: Gwydion

Physical: Strength 3, Dexterity 4, Stamina 3

Social: Charisma 3, Manipulation 2, Appearance 4

Mental: Perception 2, Intelligence 3, Wits 5



Talents: Dodge 3, Expression 2, Intimidation 3, Kenning 2, Subterfuge 3

Skills: Etiquette 4, Leadership 3, Melee 5

Knowledges: Law 2, Linguistics 1, Mythlore 1, Politics 3

Backgrounds: Chimera 2, Gremayre 5, Holdings 2, Resources 3, Title 3

Arts: Soothsay 2, Sovereign 5, Wayfare 2

Realms: Fae 4, Nature 2, Scene 3

Glamour: 4

Willpower: 4

Banalities: 2

Image: Long, blond, wavy hair tied back with a blue silk bow and arresting blue eyes look appropriate on this sidhe who favors tail coats and breeches in a mid-1700s style in his fae mien. He even has a couple of powdered wigs that he trots out for special occasions. In his mortal guise, Berwin (or Bertie to his close companions) usually wears casual polo aficionado clothes with the requisite horse and rider over the left breast of every shirt. He even has a jaunty cap for occasions that take him out of doors for extended periods.

Roleplaying Hints: In your absence, Oxford has truly blossomed in many ways. Such a pity that the commoners who were here to see the city grow are incapable of realizing what a gem they had in this place. Of course, barbarians like That Woman or those dirty redcaps can't be expected to have any appreciation for art, literature, or any of the things that separate us from beasts. It's really for the best that they left.

Kingdom of Chalk

Though the Kingdom of Chalk is predominantly composed of eshu and satyrs, Kithain from all over the island come to the sunny beaches of the south shore for holiday, and many of them decide to stay. As the sprawl of London creeps southward, more nockers of a technological bent have been setting up shop in suburbs as far south as Gatwick (where, it is said, several nockers work in maintenance).

Gladys Hazlett

When Gladys first came to what would become Pandora's, she fell in love with the place. Never mind that some stuffy bloodsucker owned the place; she decided it had to be hers. Cocky bastard that he was, he readily agreed to duel the slight girl for the deed, and even thought to put the moves on her just before they headed out to the back lot. As much as the artist disgusted her, Gladys played along and let the old fop suck a bit from her wrist...whereupon he promptly became entranced by the kaleidoscope that the world had become. Gladys helped the fool outside and got in her three touches in a flash, at which point the leech at least had the decency to honor their wager. Old Reginald still comes by occasionally to flirt with Gladys, who usually gives him a crushing insult, drowning any hope of getting another taste of, as he calls it, "thy sweet nectar". So long as Reg keeps his fangs off the patrons, he's welcome to come and watch.

Shortly after winning the Box, Gladys fell in love with Gilda Tamasi, an old acquaintance from her days in London. The two swore the Oath of True Hearts, and Gladys found herself somewhere she never expected to be: in a stable relationship, with a thriving business. Though she balked at first, the whole stability thing seems to be growing on her. She's no less wild in spirit than she was before settling down, as anyone who has seen her dance can attest.

Court: Seelie

Legacies: Troubadour/Outlaw

Seeming: Wilder

Kith: Satyr

Physical: Strength 3, Dexterity 4, Stamina 4

Social: Charisma 5, Manipulation 3, Appearance 3

Mental: Perception 2, Intelligence 3, Wits 3

Talents: Athletics 3, Brawl 2, Dodge 4, Expression 3, Streetwise 4, Subterfuge 2

Skills: Crafts 2, Melee 3, Performance (Dance) 3, Stealth 2

Knowledges: Investigation 3, Law 2, Politics 1



Backgrounds: Contacts 3, Dreamers 3, Resources 3

Arts: Chicanery 2, Legerdemain 2, Primal 4

Realms: Actor 3, Prop 3, Scene 4

Glamour: 4

Willpower: 2

Banality: 3

Image: An attractive young woman in her late teens, Gladys' enthusiasm for life and somewhat zany sense of humor help her make friends wherever she goes. A splattering of freckles covers her otherwise fair face, and her shoulder-length cocoa-brown hair is usually worn in a ponytail on the top of her head. She favors bicycle shorts in summer and stirrup pants in winter, usually topped with a cropped pullover or blouse. Her fae appearance is much the same, with a pair of knobby horns sticking out from her forehead, sometimes concealed beneath a cap.

Roleplaying Hints: You love to dance, and now that you have a club, you can share that with the whole South Coast! If only you could get those stuffy sidhe from the city to come down here, you'd have them loosen up and then who knows what would happen?

Gilda Hazlitt

Born in Camden to an English doctor and a Japanese violinist, Gilda grew up in a home with every comfort. As the oldest of three children, she often looked after her younger siblings when her parents were away on business, and as a result learned dozens of different recipes for sweets: puddings, pies, biscuits and cakes. These treats helped to keep the younger ones quiet and happy. Oh, she could cook too, and made sure that they didn't all die of malnutrition. But when the time came to choose between going to university and apprenticing herself to a pastry chef, the choice was easy.

It was then that she discovered her true nature, and everything turned upside down. Gilda left her apprenticeship and moved to Brighton with her mentor, a kindly old pooka named Cedric. After her Saining, she moved to a little flat of her own over a bakery in the North Laines. A few weeks later, she met Gladys, who had just acquired a nightclub down by the Pier. The two were inseparable, and within a month they swore the Oath of True Hearts to one another.

Now Gilda helps run the club, and makes baklava for Gladys and for festivals. She misses the life she might have had as a pastry chef, but now she has turned her talents to tending bar.

Court: Seelie

Legacies: Crafter/Rogue

Seeming: Wilder

Kith: Boggan

Physical: Strength 2, Dexterity 3, Stamina 3

Social: Charisma 4, Manipulation 3, Appearance 3

Mental: Perception 4, Intelligence 3, Wits 3

Talents: Alertness 3, Brawl 2, Dodge 2, Intimidation 4, Subterfuge 2

Skills: Crafts (Baking) 4, Drive 2

Knowledges: Computer 2, Linguistics 1, Mythlore 2

Backgrounds: Dreamers 2, Gremayre 4, Resources 3



Arts: Legerdemain 4, Primal 2, Wayfare 3

Realms: Actor 3, Scene 3

Glamour: 4

Willpower: 3

Banality: 4

Treasures: Gilda has a hip flask that never runs out of strawberry wine, which she claims can make anyone let her hair down. It does have that effect on many people, as it lowers the drinker's temporary Banality by one for a scene. Though it never runs out of the sweet liquor, Gladys has griped that after about a keg's worth it tends to get syrupy and too sweet.

Image: A plump Asian woman in her mid-20s, Gilda has a motherly quality about her that belies her wild spirit. Her dress tends to run toward flowing silks in bright colors, and she's rarely seen without a cocktail in her hand. Gilda often wears long, dangling, gold earrings, and sometimes wears her glossy black hair in a bun fixed in place with a pair of lacquered chopsticks.

In her fae mien, Gladys looks a little chubbier, though that only serves to make her appear all the more merry. She wears the same flowing silks, and she sometimes sticks a cocktail umbrella in her hair.

Roleplaying Hints: Fuss over everyone, especially Gladys. You like nothing more than a good party, but there's always a part of you concerned that someone will get hurt. Over time you've learned that nearly any hurt can be fixed, and it's better to run the risk than spend your whole life afraid.

Kingdom of Mist

The smallest of all the Albion Kingdoms, the Mistlands have kept many of the traditions alive that other kingdoms have forgotten over the years. The practice of the two courts, presiding over summer and winter respectively, has been observed here faithfully for centuries. Commoner and sidhe, Seelie and Unseelie, the ruling pair is like two sides of one coin, which is just as it should be.

Queen Karolinda

Born to a Kinain New Age shop owner and a professional violinist, Caroline (as her parents know her) has always been a precocious child. Though her parents have chosen to teach her at home, she attends ballet classes twice a week in Bath, where the instructor says she shows promise of growing into a prima ballerina who could take the London dance scene by storm.

Karolinda is known throughout the courts of Albion for her love of mortals. Members of House Liam are often disdained by the other noble houses elsewhere, but Karolinda's charm and grace have earned her the respect and allegiance of all in her kingdom, commoner and noble alike.

She rules the Kingdom of Mist from Beltaine through Samhain, and has thereby earned the title of Summer Queen from her subjects. She cares a great deal about her consort, Morwyd, and like most fae in the kingdom, Karolinda understands the necessity of finding a balance between Seelie and Unseelie. She is perplexed by tales she hears of the Shadow Court, and can scarcely believe that it can be as bad as the stories say.

Court: Seelie

Legacies: Orchid/Peacock

Seeming: Childling

Kith: Sidhe

House: Liam

Physical: Strength 1, Dexterity 4, Stamina 2

Social: Charisma 5, Manipulation 3, Appearance 6

Mental: Perception 3, Intelligence 4, Wits 3

Talents: Alertness 2, Empathy 3, Expression 3, Kenning 2, Subterfuge 3

Skills: Crafts 2, Etiquette 4, Leadership 5, Performance (Dance) 4

Knowledges: Enigmas 3, Mythlore 4, Politics 2

Backgrounds: Gremayre 2, Holdings 4, Resources 4, Retinue 5, Title 3



Arts: Soothsay 4, Sovereign 5

Realms: Actor 3, Fae 3, Prop 2

Glamour: 6

Willpower: 5

Banality: 1

Image: Karolinda, with her white-gold hair and downcast eyes the color of the Irish sea before a storm, has reminded more than one awestruck onlooker of a storybook fairy princess. Her bearing is distinctly royal, with a grace and poise remarkable even for one of the sidhe.

In her fae guise, Karolinda wears her hair swept back beneath a golden circlet engraved with an ivy pattern. Her tastes run toward pastel silk gowns, which accentuate her already angelic quality.

Roleplaying Hints: Politeness is the true mark of breeding, or so Mama always tells you. To that end, you are meticulously polite, though you also know that making people feel at ease is important. That's something you're still working on. Try to get to know people for who they are, regardless of whether they are Kithain or not.

King Morwyd

Perhaps best known for his honor guard, comprised chiefly of Unseelie pooka and nockers, Morwyd is a notorious prankster. He takes his duties as king seriously, but he also knows that it is both his right and duty as the Unseelie of the pair to bring about change. And sometimes the best way to shake things up is with a handful of snap-n-pops under the knight champion's seat. It gets everyone talking and breaks that horrible holier-than-thou silence that Karolinda seems to enjoy so much. She's a great girl, and Morwyd would do anything for her. She's just so...so...sidhe.

Though he observes the traditions of the land faithfully, Morwyd is very much a child of his time. He enjoys making miniature flying machines (often armed with cameras or remote-operated squirt pistols), and has just discovered the joy of computers. His parents in the mortal world despair of what to do with him. Though his teachers have always claimed he was bright, he has never excelled in his studies. Morwyd hopes that if he does badly enough at school, he'll be thrown out for good, leaving more time for making flying machines.

Court: Unseelie

Legacies: Riddler/Paladin

Seeming: Childling

Kith: Nocker

Physical: Strength 2, Dexterity 4, Stamina 2

Social: Charisma 3, Manipulation 5, Appearance 4

Mental: Perception 2, Intelligence 4, Wits 2

Talents: Athletics 3, Dodge 3, Intimidation 4, Subterfuge 2

Skills: Leadership 3, Security 5, Stealth 2

Knowledges: Enigmas 2, Investigation 1, Science 3

Backgrounds: Holdings 2, Mentor 3, Resources 2, Retinue 3, Title 3, Treasures 2

Arts: Legerdemain 3, Primal 5, Sovereign 3

Realms: Fae 3, Nature 2, Prop 4

Glamour: 5



Willpower: 4

Banality: 2

Treasures: Morwyd carries a silver-basket hilted rapier, a gift upon his Saining from Lord Greenlance of Nottingham, where his family sometimes traveled on holiday. He has yet to learn how to use the sword well, but fortunately for him the enchanted blade grants a certain measure of skill to the user, raising his Melee skill by +2 (giving Morwyd a whopping Melee score of 2).

Image: Morwyd cuts an impressive figure. His coal-black curls are crowned by a silver circlet engraved with ivy, which often hangs crookedly over one ear. He laughs easily, though often at times thought inappropriate by Karolinda and others.

His usual court garb consists of a paisley doublet and hose in dark violets and blues accentuated with silver accessories — though for raids and hunts he dons a silver studded suit of nightblue leather armor and an improbable great helm with blue and violet plumes.

Roleplaying Hints: For all your pranks, you are at heart-staunch traditionalist. Sometimes the old ways need a new spin, that's all. You try to keep the old ways alive, though not in the same ways as Karolinda. Let the girls dance around the maypole and leave flowers on the pillows of newlyweds; you and your boys will show everyone a thing or two. Most of the mortals in the area have forgotten the old ways. Yet farmers are learning once more that if cakes and cream are not left for the Good Folk, their crops may not grow (thanks to a fiendish thing your chief of security calls the ninny bug, a mechanical insect that can consume entire fields of seedlings).

Megan

This ancient fae has acted as the keeper of the flame at Bride's Lodge for centuries, though she appears no older than 25. When the Shattering came and forever broke the land, she chose to take on a mortal seeming that she might remain in the world. The transformation was painful, but she had sworn to protect the sacred balefire of the Isle. Though during that time

Megan would sometimes retreat into Bedlam for years at a time, she eventually learned to reconcile her fae and mortal selves.

Today she has struck a balance between her life in the everyday world and the task of guarding the sacred balefire. She chooses the women who help her to tend the flame with care, including Kinain, mages, and occasionally Garou and Kithain. Megan looks after her assistants with a motherly care, and one would be hard pressed to find anyone who left Bride's Hall with ill feelings for her.

No stats have been included for Megan; assume that this ancient fae can command all Arts and Realms at maximum or near-maximum power if the need arises.

Celia

Celia is the embodiment of a free spirit; she has hitchhiked to Prague and back, twice, and visited freeholds across the continent with only a bicycle, a backpack and her Glamour to guide her. She went through her Chrysalis in Greece, as a 16 year old in the hills above Athens. She returned to her parents house in Bath confused and broke, for once needing the attention and comfort she had for so long scorned. But her mother was away on business, and the expansion of her father's work down at the market kept him far too busy to deal with a wayward teenager. While on a long walk during that delicate time she stumbled upon Fellowship Hall, and found the only true family she has ever known.

Though she was born to relatively wealthy parents, Celia has always tried to prove to herself (and everyone around her) that she doesn't need help from anyone. The friends she has found at Fellowship Hall don't smother her, and she has the freedom to do as she pleases. For now, she is traveling around the area with a dance troupe. Tomorrow she may quit and spend a month camping out on the downs. Her only companion is a little yellow bird chimera that she calls Whittle. As long as Whittle is around she is convinced she doesn't need anyone.

Court: Unseelie



Legacies: Savage/Wayfarer
Seeming: Wilder
Kith: Satyr
Physical: Strength 3, Dexterity 3, Stamina 4
Social: Charisma 4, Manipulation 3, Appearance 4
Mental: Perception 2, Intelligence 3, Wits 4
Talents: Athletics 4, Brawl 3, Dodge 3, Expression (Painting) 3, Subterfuge 4
Skills: Drive 3, Melee 3, Performance 3, Security 2, Stealth 2
Knowledges: Law 2, Occult 1, Science 3
Backgrounds: Contacts 3, Gremayre 2
Arts: Chicanery 3, Primal 2, Wayfare 4
Realms: Fae 2, Nature 4, Scene 3
Glamour: 4
Willpower: 3
Banality: 3

Image: A lithe beauty, Celia's mixed heritage has graced her with an *au lait* complexion and long dark ringlets, which are usually worn free or swept off her face by a silver comb. Moving with an athletic grace, she is quick on her feet and a dancer without equal at Fellowship Hall's revels.

In her fae seeming, Celia's short ivory horns peek modestly through her black tresses. Her painted toenails, shown off in her mortal guise through open-toed sandals, turn into brightly lacquered hooves in her satyr form.

Roleplaying Hints: You live to explore, to experience, and to have fun. Those who refuse to embrace life will be left in the dust, and those who know how to soar will rise up. Seek out those like you, and we'll just see who lasts the longest.

Kingdom of Smoke

Though the Kingdom of Smoke is home to some of the most bitter Autumn Folk in the Isles, there are still a great many Kithain who remain, trying to turn the tide. Others plainly state that it's high time the Kithain learn to adapt to their surroundings, and try to fit into the often regimented and sterile world that centuries of industrialization have created.

Lord Davey Wheelwright

It's not easy to hold things together in the Smokelands these days, but if anyone can do it, Lord Davey can. An architect by trade, Davey has been trying to influence the style of buildings in his native Manchester, but the results are discouraging. Where Davey sees columns and flying buttresses and graceful archways, his clients inevitably see too much money, and demand something simpler, more economical. So it's back to the drawing board. Even so, he always manages to put something interesting into every building he designs. Often it's a gargoyle perched high atop the roof, or a pattern in the flagstones on the patio. Admittedly, sometimes he and his workers goof. But mistakes mean more chances to go in and jazz things up a bit!

As the ruler of the Smokelands, Davey has a struggle ahead of him. If it isn't the bloody idiots at city hall making plans to



turn the well into a reservoir, it's those backstabbing fops down in Nottingham making his life miserable. No matter, Lord Davey knows that what some see as his biggest problem — the banal chimera that has been sighted nearby — may prove to be his biggest asset. Only when confronted with an enemy do people really come together, and this is Davey's big chance to rally his people. If all goes well, the Dauntain are next on his list. Now if only he could feel safe turning his back on Nottingham....

Court: Seelie

Legacies: Paladin/Outlaw

Seeming: Wilder

Kith: Nocker

Physical: Strength 3, Dexterity 3, Stamina 3

Social: Charisma 2, Manipulation 4, Appearance 2

Mental: Perception 3, Intelligence 4, Wits 4

Talents: Alertness 2, Dodge 3, Kenning 4, Streetwise 2

Skills: Crafts (Architecture) 5, Drive 2, Leadership 2, Melee 3, Security 2

Knowledges: Computer 2, Law 1, Science 4

Backgrounds: Chimera 2, Contacts 3, Holdings 2, Resources 3, Title 2, Treasures 3

Arts: Legerdemain 3, Primal 4

Realms: Actor 2, Prop 4, Scene 3

Glamour: 5

Willpower: 3

Banality: 3

Treasures: Davey's Treasures include a feather-quill pen with a never-ending supply of ink. He also has a prize suit of chimerical armor handed down from a distant relative, though it takes over an hour to don the entire contraption.

Image: Lord Davey's close-cropped blond hair appears white to Kithain eyes. His everyday costume is a dark-brown Oxford shirt with the sleeves rolled up, with somewhat-worn navy corduroys.

Though his dress is otherwise fairly conservative, he has a fondness for intricately patterned silk ties, which he usually wears loosely knotted. Lord Davey always has a pen or pencil behind one ear, occasionally his prize quill pen. Though he often seems to be in a hurry, Davey tries to be sensitive to the needs of all his subjects.

For court occasions, Lord Davey has an intricately slashed suit of Renaissance-inspired court garb in navy and mahogany tones accented with silver buckles and buttons. No one seems to remember him wearing his prize armor, though he is occasionally seen polishing or tinkering with it.

Roleplaying Hints: You're proud of your city, damn it. So what if most of your subjects are redcaps? So what if the sidhe down in the Roselands have called Manchester "a festering sore on the face of our island." You have nowhere to go but up, and you welcome the challenge.

Lord Wilmaron Greenlance

This dashing noble has caught the eye of more than one lady in the courts of Albion, and his dalliances are nearly-legendary. This doesn't seem to phase Lady Greenlance, though, who seems equally prolific when it comes to romance.

Wilmaron passes his days among mortals, as the C.E.O. of an advertising firm. After choosing just the right art and the right slogan from those his underlings propose, he is a master at closing a deal. The Glamour he ravages from his employees is just the icing on the cake. If he were in a London firm he might be relegated to answering phones and making copies, but as the head of his own company up here in scenic downtown Nottingham, he travels to Paris, Stockholm and Madrid on a regular basis, staying in touch with corporate clients who know that to get your money's worth it's best to avoid pricey London firms.

Lord Wilmaron also acts as the unofficial leader of the Shadow Court in England. Among his current pupils is King Morwyd from the Kingdom of Mist, with whom he has been keeping up a correspondence for some time. When the time is right, the child



will make a valuable asset to the Court, and might even prove to be the high king the country has needed for so long.

Court: Unseelie

Legacies: Outlaw/Crafter

Seeming: Wilder

Kith: Eshu

Physical: Strength 3, Dexterity 4, Stamina 2

Social: Charisma 3, Manipulation 5, Appearance 4

Mental: Perception 3, Intelligence 4, Wits 4

Talents: Alertness 2, Dodge 3, Intimidation 4, Kenning 2, Streetwise 2, Subterfuge 4

Skills: Drive 3, Etiquette 4, Firearms 3, Leadership 3, Melee 4, Security 2

Knowledge: Enigmas 3, Investigation 2, Mythlore 1, Occult 3

Backgrounds: Chimera 2, Contacts 4, Holdings 3, Resources 3, Treasures 2

Arts: Soothsay 3, Sovereign 3, Wayfare 1

Realms: Actor 3, Fae 3, Nature 1, Scene 2

Glamour: 5

Willpower: 6

Banality: 5

Treasures: Lord Greenlance wields a wicked-looking, serrated longsword with an emerald in its hilt. Some claim it once belonged to a knight who betrayed his lord, but Wilmaron dismisses this as a foolish superstition. The blade does give the wielder an advantage in defense, as it adds +1 to the wielder's Dodge score.

Image: A dark-haired Gypsy with flashing obsidian eyes, Lord Greenlance is the very image of Heathcliff from *Wuthering Heights*. A pianist of some renown, his long slender fingers move with inhuman dexterity across the keyboard, coaxing unearthly melodies and familiar tunes from his instrument.

For formal occasions, Greenlance and his lady both favor green velvet and brocade outfits with an Elizabethan flair.

Roleplaying Hints: You are a man with vision, unlike that prattling idiot Wheelwright and the rest. While other Kithain seek to bemoan the lost glory of Camelot, you are moving forward. It is only by adapting to the ways that the world has changed that any of you survive — and you intend to be on top when it's all sorted out.

Kingdom of Heather Laurence Ormond

Lawrence Ormond is in a difficult position: The woman he loves is in the grip of Autumn, and nothing, not even the power of his love for her, seems able to break its spell. His lady, Rebecca, loves him deeply as well, though she sometimes feels he is a bit impractical. What is more troubling, she is beginning to suspect he is having an affair, for when he is called away on kingdom business, he refuses to tell her where he is going or why. Many of his friends fear that he may soon decide to leave his responsibilities to the kingdom behind, and join her in a world that has no place for things fae.



In his spare time, Lawrence makes replicas of medieval and Renaissance blades. He once dreamed of discovering the secrets of the ancient smiths, who could weave Glamour into blades, but now he is content working at his forge on weekends and occasional evenings, creating pieces for collectors and re-creationists.

Court: Seelie

Legacies: Saint/Fatalist

Seeming: Grump

Kith: Troll

Physical: Strength 4, Dexterity 4, Stamina 5

Social: Charisma 3, Manipulation 3, Appearance 3

Mental: Perception 4, Intelligence 3, Wits 5

Talents: Alertness 2, Athletics 2, Brawl 4, Dodge 3, Intimidation 2

Skills: Drive 2, Etiquette 2, Leadership 2, Melee 3

Knowledges: Computers 2, Investigation 4, Law 4, Politics 3

Backgrounds: Holdings 3, Resources 4, Title 2

Arts: Primal 2, Soothsay 4, Sovereign 3

Realms: Actor 3, Nature 3, Scene 4

Glamour: 4

Willpower: 3

Banality: 4

Image: A tall man with rugged good looks, Lord Ormond is imposing in his mortal seeming and doubly so to those who see his changeling seeming; he is a towering troll with a seafoam-blue complexion. A visitor from Concordia once joked that if had he been born across the Atlantic, he would surely have been courted by every basketball team in that country.

Roleplaying Hints: You are a man torn between two worlds, and the strain is beginning to show. Friends fear that you may slip into Bedlam, and to tell the truth, you secretly feel that it would be a relief. But the kingdom needs you, and so you will continue to plod along, hoping a solution will present itself.

Billy

Tour guides all over England share a certain style. Most affect Oxbridge accents to sound authoritative, and the majority present their sites with a boredom that comes of giving the same speech 10 times a day for years on end. But not Billy, he gives walking tours of "Supernatural York," and his tip jar is always full at the end of the trip. Not everything that Billy says is necessarily accurate in the strictest possible sense, but it certainly is entertaining. And if people come home with some exciting stories about what Evil Vampire Lord So-and-So did to the Viking cabin boy who was left behind...well, so long as they're talking. They're getting more people interested in the town, and that can't help but be good for business, right?

Though Billy tries to be a ladies man, he's often a miserable failure. Perhaps it's the fact that his creepy friend Jared often appears right behind him out of nowhere at the most awkward times, or because some of his lines sound a bit trite. ("I've never loved anyone so much, Janet.... What? Oh, I mean Jill.") But even if he isn't the heartthrob he fancies himself to be, Billy has several good friends, including Jared and Sachi.

Court: Seelie

Legacies: Bumpkin/Riddler

Seeming: Wilder

Kith: Pooka (Goat)

Physical: Strength 2, Dexterity 3, Stamina 3

Social: Charisma 3, Manipulation 4, Appearance 2

Mental: Perception 4, Intelligence 3, Wits 3

Talents: Alertness 2, Dodge 4, Streetwise 4, Subterfuge 5

Skills: Performance 3, Security 3, Stealth 2

Knowledges: Enigmas 2, Law 1, Mythlore 2, Occult 2

Backgrounds: Chimera 3, Resources 2

Arts: Chicanery 5, Legerdemain 2, Soothsay 1

Realms: Actor 4, Fae 2, Prop 4

Glamour: 5



Willpower: 3

Banalities: 3

Image: In his mortal seeming, Billy is a compact 20-something with limp, dirty blond hair and the beginnings of a “grunge” goatee. In his pooka seeming, Billy sprouts two knobby horns on his forehead and his beard grows a good three inches. As a goat pooka, Billy is often mistaken for a satyr, a resemblance he is quick to exploit to pick up girls whenever possible.

Roleplaying Hints: Anything and everything can be interesting, if looked at from the right angle. If you don’t know the reason for something, you will always make something interesting up; after all, why make up something *boring*?

Jared

Born to a wealthy Midwestern American family, Jared was always a difficult child. He did not play well with others, and his parents feared that he was growing into a terribly antisocial individual. So when he showed an interest in attending college in the UK, they were more than happy to pack him off, credit cards in tow, in the hopes that at the end of three or four years he would come back a new person.

Three of those years have passed, and Jared has never enrolled anywhere. Instead, he has given himself an education, reading and writing Gothic poetry, clubbing and hanging out until dawn on the city streets. Jared typically splits his time between York and Whitby, spending weekdays in the relatively deserted Whitby and weekends and holidays in town.

Court: Unseelie

Legacies: Wretch/Hermit

Seeming: Wilder

Kith: Sluagh

Physical: Strength 2, Dexterity 5, Stamina 4

Social: Charisma 2, Manipulation 2, Appearance 1

Mental: Perception 5, Intelligence 4, Wits 3

Talents: Alertness 4, Athletics 3, Dodge 4, Kenning 2, Street-wise 4

Skills: Melee 2, Security 3, Stealth 4, Survival 3

Knowledges: Enigmas 4, Investigation 2, Mythlore 3, Occult 2

Backgrounds: Chimera 3, Gremayre 4,

Arts: Primal 2, Soothsay 4, Wayfare 5

Realms: Nature 3, Prop 2, Scene 3

Glamour: 4

Willpower: 4

Banalities: 3

Image: A tall, lanky youth with dark hair and eyes, Jared is the sort of person drivers are likely to avoid when he is seen hitchhiking back and forth from Whitby to York. Jared rarely looks people in the eye, and is most often seen wearing T-shirts from various Cure and NIN tours. His mixed Eastern European-American heritage has given him a swarthy complexion that is dark even for the usually pasty-faced sluagh.



Roleplaying Hints: Listen. So many people seem to hate silence. They’ll say anything that comes to mind just so they don’t have to deal with the uneasiness that sometimes comes with silence. It doesn’t bother you in the least. The only thing that allows you to put up with them is knowing that you sometimes find out interesting tidbits by listening to their blather.

Principality of Tears Lady Ellyndil

Lady Ellyndil is well-known among Kithain and mortals alike as a great patroness of the arts. Her artist colony in the Lakes District is becoming known as one of the most beautiful retreats for up-and-coming English painters and other artists. Those who pass the portfolio review for admission are guaranteed room and board for a year, as well as whatever materials they need, within reason.

A shrewd politician, Lady Ellyndil is content to advise friends like Davey Wheelwright on policy, rather than get into the trenches herself. She seems to remember having been someone terribly important in Arcadia, and uses that as a reason to stay out of politics here in this world.

She once invited Lady Greenlance up for a long weekend, as they both shared an interest in promoting the young artists in the area. But it soon became apparent that the lady from Nottingham was an incorrigible Ravager, more interested in what she could obtain from her victims than the actual art they produced. The two quarreled, and have not spoken since.

Court: Seelie

Legacies: Paladin/Peacock

Seeming: Wilder

Kith: Sidhe



House: Fiona
Physical: Strength 3, Dexterity 2, Stamina 2
Social: Charisma 4, Manipulation 3, Appearance 5
Mental: Perception 2, Intelligence 4, Wits 3
Talents: Alertness 2, Dodge 1, Empathy 3, Expression 4, Kenning 3
Skills: Crafts 4, Etiquette 5, Leadership 2, Performance 2
Knowledges: Enigmas 2, Linguistics 3, Mythlore 3, Politics 4
Backgrounds: Contacts 2, Dreamers 3, Holdings 3, Title 2
Arts: Sovereign 4, Soothsay 3, Wayfare 2
Realms: Actor 4, Fae 4, Nature 3
Glamour: 8
Willpower: 6
Banality: 2

Image: This lovely sidhe's laughing blue eyes have been compared by more than one poet to the color of a lake at mid-summer. She usually wears her ash-blond hair up in a loose knot, and favors long, intricate earrings.

In her fae mien, Lady Ellyndil wears gowns of subdued blues and greens, often embroidered with a silver dragonfly pattern, matching the standard that flies above her home. She is often seen playing her lute, a master crafted instrument inlaid with silver knotwork along its neck.

Roleplaying Hints: You are a serious woman most of the time, for you understand the realities of life as an artist. But though your practical side has allowed you to bring the music and art you love together in this beautiful place, it would all mean nothing without a sense for the beautiful, for the magical things in life.

Mages

*'Tis now the very witching time of night,
 When churchyards yawn and hell itself breathest out
 Contagion to this world. Now could I drink hot blood,
 And do such bitter business as the day
 Would quake to look on.*

— William Shakespeare, *Hamlet*

Magic has long been a part of the English landscape, from the ladies of Avalon to the Witch of the West Moorland. Nor have all willworkers of legend been female; though some would dispute his nationality, the English definitely place Merlin alongside the other quintessential English heroes of legend.

Traditions

The Traditions in England are far less formally organized than their American cousins. Though Ascension remains a concern of many, the politics that so often accompany the war for the minds and souls of humanity are largely absent from England. The Technocracy are still considered the enemy, but individuals sometimes break the lines to discuss philosophy, rugby or the latest *James Bond* film with other minds that are their equals. The Awakened form a class unto themselves in England, and in many cases mages on both sides of the Ascension War view their opponents as the loyal opposition. Of course, those who have fallen victim to the occasional HIT Mark or Progenitor experiment with the water supply feel otherwise, but for the most part the two sides each try to work subtly. Even if two mages are on different sides of the battle, that doesn't mean they can't act civil toward one another.

Vicki Choi

Essence: Questing

Nature: Visionary

Demeanor: Rebel

Tradition: Akashic Brotherhood

Attributes: Strength 3, Dexterity 4, Stamina 3, Charisma 2, Manipulation 3, Appearance 2, Perception 3, Intelligence 4, Wits 5

Abilities: Alertness 1, Athletics 3, Do 2, Instruction 3, Intuition 1, Meditation 2, Melee 3, Stealth 2, Culture 3, Linguistics 3, Law 1

Backgrounds: Allies 2, Avatar 2, Destiny 1, Influence 1

Spheres: Correspondence 1, Mind 3, Prime 2

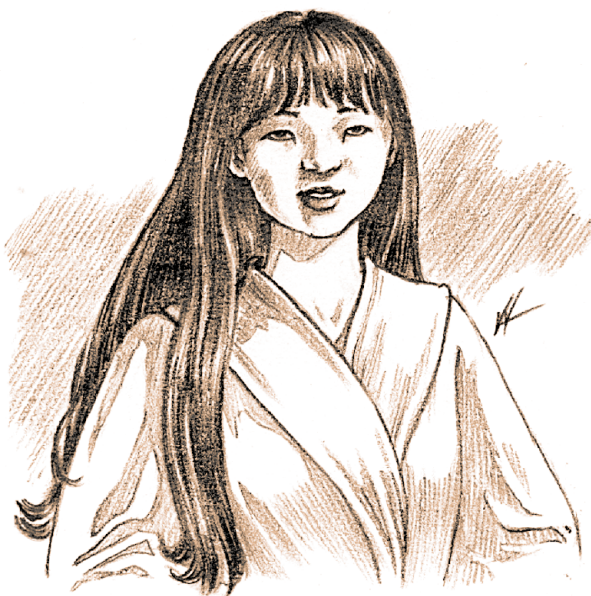
Arete: 3

Willpower: 6

Quintessence: 5

Paradox: 2

Background: Growing up on the streets of London wasn't easy for the child of immigrant parents. But Chinatown was a wonderful, magical place all the same, and Vicki soon found out that there was more to learn on the street than in the classroom. In an attempt



to curb her truancy, her parents enrolled her in martial arts classes after school, and it was there that she found her true calling. She Awakened one day as the result of prolonged fasting and holding positions, as she felt a blast of energy and light fill her from within.

She has continued her studies since, and has recently become an instructor in some of the lower-level classes. Vicki hopes to bring the enlightenment that she has found to others like her, Asian and European alike. She has recently discovered Kabuki theater, and hopes to find a way to adapt what she has learned to this ancient art form.

Image: A petite girl in her late teens, Vicki usually dresses in loose-fitting garments even when not practicing or teaching. Outside the studio, she usually lets her long dark hair fall to her waist, or holds it back with a silver headband.

Roleplaying Hints: You feel very strongly that Ascension is ultimately a personal journey, and that the notion of an Ascension War is a contradiction in terms. Each person must find his own way, and you hope to guide people to whichever path works for them.

Quote: *Come with me and I will teach you the way to enlightenment.*

Mitchell Savoy

Essence: Dynamic

Nature: Deviant

Demeanor: Director

Tradition: Cult of Ecstasy (Acharne)

Attributes: Strength 3, Dexterity 2, Stamina 4, Charisma 4, Manipulation 5, Appearance 3, Perception 3, Intelligence 4, Wits 3

Abilities: Awareness 3, Brawl 2, Dodge 2, Intimidation 3, Seduction 5, Streetwise 4, Subterfuge 4, Drive 1, Etiquette 3, Firearms 2, Research 1, Technology 1, Computer 1, Culture 3, Investigation 2, Law 3, Linguistics 3 (French, Italian), Medicine 2, Occult 3

Backgrounds: Contacts 3, Influence 4, Resources 5

Spheres: Entropy 1, Life 3, Spirit 2, Time 3

Arete: 6

Willpower: 8

Quintessence: 4

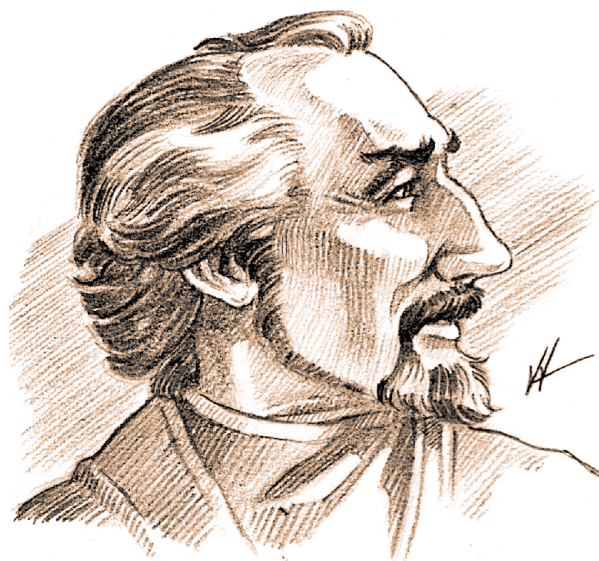
Paradox: 3

Background: Few people would think that Mitchell Savoy was anything more than what he first appears: a successful investor and businessman who enjoys a bit of sherry after meals. And that he is; his private worth has been estimated at over £17 million, and his influence in the financial district is considerable. If few people are aware that he is the owner of Guilty Pleasures in the suburbs of London, it's just as well. Those who have not heard of it are probably better off remaining ignorant.

Ever since the reign of Victoria, Englishmen have suffered from a profound guilt surrounding all things sexual. Words are branded "dirty", as if there could be some danger in contamination from contact with them. Television programs occasionally show partial nudity, but it is never discussed. Oscar Wilde and thousands like him were jailed and exiled, simply for what they chose to do in the privacy of their own homes.

As a young man, it occurred to Mitchell Savoy that one could make a considerable living by catering to the dark desires of the British upper class. His Awakening and initiation into the Cult of Ecstasy only served to strengthen his resolve to bring the freedom of sensation to the masses. But he soon learned that the masses simply weren't ready for it. It was then that he discovered a private club known as Guilty Pleasures, a kind of private play party for the elite established back in the late 1700s. Those who were running it were only too happy to hand it over to someone who could devote his full attention and considerable personal resources, and so it was that Savoy built the club into what it is today.

Image: An older, upper-class British-looking man with graying-brown hair and sharp hazel eyes, Mitchell is not your typical Cultist. But despite his conservative appearance, the light in his eyes betrays his ultimately wild spirit. His hands are incredibly supple from years of conditioning with lotions and oils.





Roleplaying Notes: You know that everyone has secrets, and it's your mission to provide a place where there are no secrets, no shame, no reason for people to be other than what they are. Of course, if along the way you end up with some good blackmail material, should problems arise, so much the better.

The Technocracy

*They say Victoria loved her islands,
Well that's because she owned them all
A feather pen and an iron fist
Put a peoples' back against the wall.*

— Andy M. Stewart, *Take It to the People*

Most Tradition mages think the Technocracy has but a weak hold over Britannia. English mystics aren't constantly under threat of destruction by the legions of Iteration X or New World Order assassins.

And that's just the way the Technocracy planned it.

Subtlety is everything to English Technocrats. For if the enemy doesn't perceive a threat, he will remain disunited and at ease, failing to notice his opponents incremental increases in power. The Technocracy's hold over England is only surpassed in some respects by its control over Japan.

The modern English mind-set is one of order, propriety and unflinching politeness. Compared to many other similar nations, there is very little crime in Britain. Long-standing traditions and rituals are observed on a regular basis, whether it is the changing of the guard at Buckingham Palace or the daily break for tea still observed in the northern counties. The trains run on time, the class structure endures and millions sleep peacefully knowing that Britannia rules. What many Tradition mages fail to realize is that the Technocracy is about much more than gizmos and weapons and biological warfare. They have their own vision of Utopia — an ordered, peaceful world ruled by an intellectual aristocracy who know what is best for the masses. Through their wisdom, the world may yet achieve perfection. And if England has fewer gizmos and techno toys (with the notable exception of Q Division) per capita than many of her colonies across the sea, that doesn't mean the Technocracy has less control here.

Nephandi

Like the Technocracy, most Nephandi have learned that the best way to survive in England is through subtlety. The Church of England has Bible-thumpers just as enthusiastic (if not more so) than their "saved" counterparts in America, and they are quick to publicly condemn anything that smacks of sin or impropriety. But in a society with so many rules, there are bound to be some who transgress, and who are overcome with guilt as a result. The Fallen Ones of England are drawn to these guilt-ridden souls, and to them that they turn to find kindred spirits in darkness.

Another benefit of such a regimented society is that people are less likely to believe that those at the top are capable of transgressions. Though the younger royals have gone a long way toward shattering that myth, it still retains a lot of influence over the collective subconscious. The burden of perfection weighs

heavily on those at the top of the social pyramid, and more than one heir or monarch in years past has fallen under the spell of these dark mages.

The Prodigal

Just as Britain has drawn Dreamers for centuries, so has it drawn the supernatural. Since the Renaissance, mystical groups have lived in relative peace, with only the occasional skirmish between Garou and Kindred. Noted alliances include the Gangrel clan and many of the werewolves in Yorkshire, as well as the Glastonbury Compact, which included werewolves as well as mages and fae.

Vampires

The Kindred of England are dominated (no pun intended) by the Ventrué, as has been the case for centuries. It has even been said that King Albion and Mithras met every other week to play chess more than a century ago. Few Tremere dare visit London or Glastonbury, though it is said a few have taken up residence in Sheffield and Manchester. The others are found in varying numbers throughout the country, with Toreador prevailing in the south and Gangrel controlling much of Yorkshire. A small coterie of Giovanni in the Docklands area of London is supposedly the final outpost of the lost Cappadocian clan, though no one seems to know for certain.

Werewolves

The Brotherhood of Herne is strong throughout England, as are other groups of Fianna cut off from Ireland by politics, both mortal and Garou. Other septs can be found near Bodman Moor and near Hadrian's Wall, as well as a sept of Children of Gaia known to exist outside Brighton.

As for other Changing Breeds, they are few in England. One of the ravens at the Tower is said to be a Corax, and a pair of hengeyokai have been seen about London's Chinatown. Their fae cousins, the selkies, are occasionally seen off the Cornwall coast, though most of the seal-folk congregate in Ireland and Scotland.

Wraiths

The spirits of the dead seem to have a special connection to the land of Britain, perhaps owing to the fact that even today, many people remember and revere them. For the Restless Dead, the amount of memorium generated when the local "Ghost Walk" chooses to visit your Haunt can be considerable.

The Hierarchy dominates England, and in fact many British gaunts have gone on to hold prominent positions both in Europe and the New World's Shadowlands. Perhaps the fact that so many English wraiths are members of the Hierarchy could also relate to the number of wraiths who still retain their fetters here; after becoming ensnared in the politics of the dead, few seek to resolve their Passions or pursue Transcendence.

Mummies

Dr. Gregory Wildham, an Egyptologist at the British Museum, is one of the only Ancient Ones known to exist in England, although many others may exist in secret. Dr. Wildham is an affable older gentleman, who seems to be on good terms with vampires, mages and even the odd changeling. He acts as something of a favorite uncle to many of the supernaturals and mortal graduate students in the area, calmly dispensing advice on subjects ranging from love to the best way to kill a Black Spiral Dance to what Mithras was like as a neonate.

Formori

A few of these foul creatures have been sighted in England, mainly in what the Kithain refer to as the Kingdom of Smoke, in the Midlands. Others have spoken of hideous misshapen beasts roaming the moors in Yorkshire and on the heath in Cornwall. At first thought to be really ugly nockers, redcaps or rogue chimera, a cabal of mages found that the creatures sighted south of Newcastle were indeed formori, and rallied Garou and mages (as well as more than a few nockers and redcaps bent on vengeance) from the surrounding area to rout the fiends.





Book Two: Scotland

Chapter Four:

history of Scotland

*So oft as I with state of present time,
The image of the antique world compare,
When as mans age was in his freshest prime,
And the first blossome of faire vertue bare,
Such oddes I finde twixt those, and these which are,
As that, through long continuance of his course,
Me seemes the world is runne quite out of square,
From the first point of his appointed sourse,
And being once amisse growes daily wourse and wourse.*
— Spenser, “The Fairie Queene”

Day Two

—Iain (Paz) McCallum (Seelie nocker, Duthie Park Freehold), *Scotland and How It Got That Way* (extracts)

Oh. Right, right. Yea, I know I’m up, am just a bit headachey, right? What? What are you prattling on about so loud, and me with King Niall’s own hangover? No smoking? You mean I’m to yammer on for an hour with not a single smoke? By God! I say it again: By God! Shove off, why don’t you, I wouldnae want to accidentally drive my fist into your gob. And you, dear, have pity on a poor dying nocker and bring me a flask of Glenlivet from the back, will you? There’s a love.

Hullo. Iain McCallum’s the name, but my pals call me Paz. I see nothing of said pals in this audience at this ungodly hour of the morning. No doubt they’re off sensibly sacked out after a prolonged gad about the town last night. And me, me, having drunk ‘em all under a series of tables, is the one who gets roused at dawn to talk up the history

of Scotland and show off my head, which as you can see is a bit larger than this whole room, or anyway feels quite like it. But enough about me.

To start with, if you’d understand Scotland — or Caledonia, as the Kithain call it — you must know right off that it is the homeland of the Scots, an independent people, currently conquered and occupied by a criminal foreign power: England. You can take your “United Kingdom” and stick it up your arse, for mortals and fae mean to run our country for ourselves, have done in the past, and will again in the near future, God and King Niall and the sot-headed Scottish leadership willing.

Some fellow said there was some professor who meant to show slides when I talked, or timelines — that sort of thing. But I dinna see a screen, so — Eh? Not so loud, my head is bursting. Oh, you’re the professor, you say? Well, pal, you’ve mucked up, haven’t you, what with no screev — *Jesus Christ!* By God! What, is it your doing, bringing this thing out of nowhere? By God, like to soil my trousers, I was so startled. Oh my head.



The Roman Occupation

A.D.

78-84

Agricola advances into Scotland, then retreats.

120

Roman Emperor Hadrian builds wall on Scottish border.

Well, I guess we have a screen...as you might call it. Ahh, here's my salvation, thank you, love. Ahhh. Let me urge on all of you the finest product in the history of civilization, and a hundred-percent Scottish from the year nought: whiskey! All right then, I am fortified and can now go on. Show your first slide, eh?

Everybody knows that Hadrian built that wall to keep the Picts out, Picts being the mortal folk who lived here before the Scots dropped in. But only the fae know this: that the wall also keeps some others not *out*, but *down*.

It happened that the Romans trotting up from Europe attracted the attention of a few Mediterranean fair folk who called themselves Pyrics. We dinna know a jot about the Pyrics; they were North African, I heard, or Sardinian as may be. Like wilder eshu, but violent — not to take away from our own redcaps, glad to see you all — much given to shifting lights, St. Elmo's Fire, and lightning bolts. They were a curious lot, too, following the Romans (infested some of their boats, I hear) to get a taste of Caledonian Glamour. Nor were they keen on loyalty, as they soon took to blowing up Picts and Romans with cheery abandon.

So Hadrian, I suppose, says to his magicians, "Take care of this little thing." Magicians set to work — think, think — and finally they say, "We shall join the land with the sea, and trap these fae between them." It happens that joining land to sea, in case you've a mind to try, is done by building this long wall from ocean to ocean. Hadrian says, "Right, go to it, and keep the Picts out while you're about it," and everyone pitches in with a will. The magicians call on the local sidhe and gollachs (satyrs) to help lure the Pyrics to the wall. Pyrics trot up, magicians bind them and bury them and seal the pits with cold iron. Hadrian piles the wall on top. End of problem.

The wall is there yet, and tourists must keep the Banality level quite lethal. But if anyone ever lets loose the Pyrics, I wouldna want to think what might happen. Next slide, and how about a bit more of this choice malt?

The Scots must have driven out or slaughtered all the Picts. But among the fair folk, matters went somewhat differently.

The original fae of Pictish times in these lands were the Blue People — don't know their name in their own tongue, not that it matters a whit now. We called them Blue for the way their hair and skin changed color each night. The "we," in this case, means the sidhe leaders of the 13 fae Houses, who came to Caledonia with the Scots mortal tribes. These 13 leaders, called the Wise Council — probably called themselves that, being smug sidhe bastards — the Wise Council wanted to take up life here without bloodshed. But the Blue People were rude folk, very hard bitten, and wanted nothing of the invaders. It looked like bloody war.

But then some clever thinker whose name is lost to history, and who therefore must have been a nocker, said, "What say

we don't slaughter at random, but instead have a nice drinking contest? Each army gathers at the battlefield and sends forth one champion, the biggest drinker among all its people. They set down, start drinking whiskey (or mead, or whatever they had for tippeling back then) and the last side on its feet takes the field."

This appealed to both sides better than the idea of cutting up fair folk. Perhaps each side also took it that if they lost, well, they still had an army and could always go ahead with the slaughter as they'd planned. So they went ahead with the drinking contest, and trust me, they got no shortage of volunteers. I like to think of the preliminary qualifying bouts, as you may say, as those soldiers tried to outdrink one another.

So, after everyone recovered from these early matches, the armies chose their champions and gathered around the field. But before the contest — follow me close here — King Eirim of the Unseelie Court brought forth a Bottomless Urn of, of, I'll call it mead. And Eirim said, "Let all on both sides drink a toast of honor and friendship." Well, I daresay nobody, even in those days, gladly took a drink offered by an Unseelie lord, but the Blue People's suspicions were lulled as each soldier on the Scots side marched up in order and drank deep. So the Blue People drank, too, and the mead from the Bottomless Urn was sweet indeed.

Then the Blue People trotted forth their champion for the drinking contest, a huge, bandy-legged, wart-skinned, knobbly troll name of Pythos, big as a horse and half as smart. He took up the entire Bottomless Urn in one hand and knocked back a quart or two just to show off, and all the Blue People cheered.

Then out comes the drinking champion of the Scots — and it's a little boggan, name of — well, you, the childling in the second row, what's your name? Angus? Why, as it happens, that was this boggan's name, too. So all the rough, tough Blue People saw Angus waddle out, and they all laughed. But the two champions went to it, the troll Pythos and the boggan Angus, and wonder of wonders! As they swilled from the Bottomless Urn like pigs at a trough, the boggan kept up with the troll, drop for drop. After a few dozen bottles' worth, Pythos was staggering, but Angus — he was swelling up like a gooseberry, but he kept pouring it down with a big smile.

Not only that. As the contest went on, all the Blue People came to feel a bit flushed, and then a bit jovial, and then out of sorts, somewhat, and at last they realized they were right royally pissed, one and all. Then they saw that King Eilim had done them, for — aye, you guessed it — he had enchanted both Angus and the mead, so that all the drunkenness that Angus accumulated, so to speak, got funneled instead to the others who drank the mead. But the Wise Council had made their own troops immune, do you see, and so the enemy army took it all.

So when Pythos finally fell over, the proud army of the Blue People were all snookered out of their minds. The Wise Council pronounced the contest over, the Scots victorious, and they set their troops to shoveling the Blues onto a flotilla of boats and sent them floating east over the North Sea. Last I heard they ended up in Norway, where to this day they are all still hung over, and believe me, there are few worse fates.

Ah, those were the glory days, which I commemorate with this toast, so...Mmmmm. Ahh. Next.

The Time of the Picts

140-143	Romans occupy southern Scotland, build Antonine wall to mark frontier.
150+	Pictish shamans battle Celtic shamans; both sides depopulated, results inconclusive.
206	Pictish tribes from northern Scotland attack Hadrian's Wall.
350-69	Scots and Picts conduct border raids into England.
400s	Scots ("Scotti") tribes arrive from Ireland, bringing Gaelic language with them.
410	Romans withdraw from Britain.
450-1300s	Forerunners of Celestial Chorus (various sects) enter Scotland and begin to establish churches.
455	Native shamans burn wooden cross in Stirling, invoking the wrath of local Choristers; feuding throughout the region lasts through the 1200s.

Och, that is fine whiskey. Fine. Yeh, yeh, stop your whingeing, I'll get on with it. Her Majesty, Lady Ellyndil, says this little get-together should teach the fair folk about magicians, and also vice versa. I happen to know somewhat of the doings of mages in the Highlands because they spent quite a lot of the last few centuries trying to wipe out the fair folk. King Niall has his bards talk to everyone in court, on and on, about that lot of mages what are called the Technocracy. They're very big in Caledonia.

It was only this past 15 or 20 years that we folk in the Kingdom of Alba — or anyhow, that I personally — learned that there were other kinds of mages than the Technocracy, people interested not in dismantling every good and decent thing of Scotland, but in protecting its heritage. Well, I mean, we knew of the occasional witch or hobbling old man with a cat familiar — not that there are many such up Aberdeen way. But we never knew them to be organized. See what I'm saying?

They tell me that the meeting of the two came about by a nocker, down Dalriada way, but I dinna know who. So 20 years back, this nocker heard rumor of strange and fascinating machinery — from who, and what kind, I never heard — at a nightclub in Edinburgh. She went there, but the Banality level went so high during a folk-rock revival that she went all out of sorts and ran. She stumbled down into a basement and broke through a door — I dinna hear why — am a bit vague on this story, as you can tell.

So, anyway, there she found some of what are called Men in Black doing bad things to a magician of what are called the Sons of Ether, visiting over from America. They were using a torture device, it popped out the eyeballs or somewhat of that kind, and the poor sod's screams touched the nocker's heart. Or, more like, she just wished to look over the machine. Either way, she pops over, sort of stares hard at the contraption and dismantles it, and the Men in Black get after her. Meanwhile the magician gets free, blows up the bastards with a laser pistol, and the nocker and mortal get out together.

They fell in as pals, and the two sort of initiated one another, as you might say. But though the mages and the fae got all cozy

The Vikings

- 600s Unseelie Lord Coruisk sails from Eire to establish the Kingdom of Shadows on the Isle of Skye. An ancient faerie, he rules for more than a millennium.
- 793 First Viking raids.
- 843 Picts and Scots unite under Kenneth McAlpin.
- 850 Order of Hermes establishes covenants throughout Scotland, particularly on the Highland moors. All of these except Michael Scot's (founded 1238) are subsequently destroyed or moved to Horizon Realms.

The Defeat of the Vikings

- 878 King Alfred defeats Vikings, but allows them to settle eastern England.
- 879+ Germanic proto-Verbena and early Hermetics settle in the islands throughout the Dark Ages.
- 950 Sightings of Questing Beast in Cairngorms.

together in Dalriada and the Lowlands, up in the Highlands we fae were a bit longer in getting to know them. Typical. But I have got a wee bit ahead of meself, so just another swallow and on to the next slide, thanks.

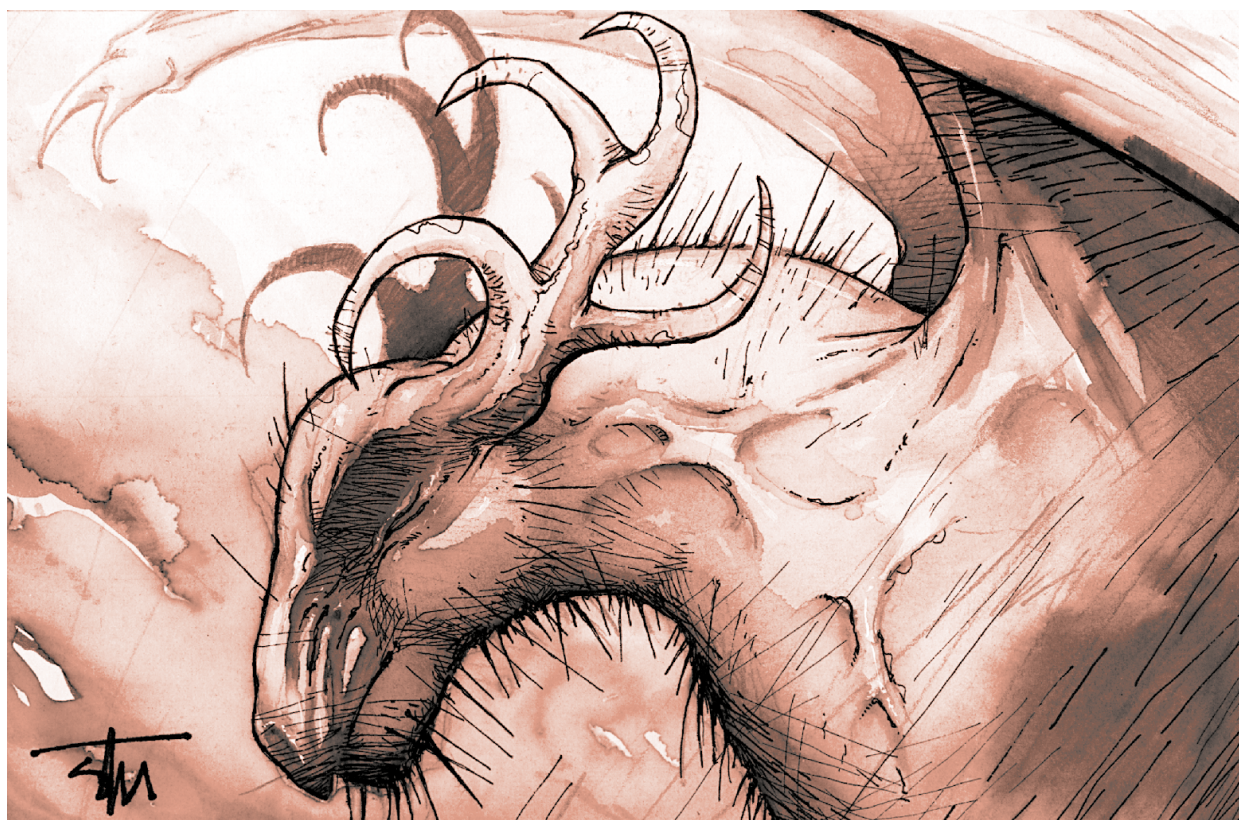
Arrr, it's to be the Questing Beast today, is it? Let the record show a heavy groan, and not from me hangover either. Dinna think that I disbelieve in the Questing Beast, nor think it nonsense to go look for it. Only, look what happens to the folk that search for it, eh?

What I know is, the Questing Beast is a huge deer, or dragon or bear — not that we've had bears in Caledonia these 10 centuries gone or more, never mind your dragons! It shows up in a dream, or a vision, or like that, to some poor sod who has a big unanswered question, like: How shall I live? Shall I give my good friend Paz a fortune in Dross? Said sod sees this Beast and somehow understands it can answer the question, if only he catches it.

So off he goes after the Beast. He always finds it somewhere quick and sets after it, but it's always a bit ahead of him, and he must grow ever more committed, and clever, and devious. Somewhere along the line the Beast leads him into some complete hellhole of trouble. And in the crisis he finds he's a different bloke, see? Changed, like. And the Beast is long gone, but the bloke's new understanding not only works him out of the trouble but also answers his question.

That's the reality of it. Now, versions abound, so dinna be telling me that the Questing Beast is just the great hart from Arthurian legend which Pellinore and Palamede sought. That hart was one, what you might say, *manifestation*. Its belly rumbled with the sound of 30 questing hounds — like mine after drinking that warm piss the English call draft bitter, not that I touch it unless forced.

Be that as it might, in both legend and reality, this Beast can do most anything to elude its hunter: It can heal itself of mortal wound and poisons; it can outrun all but faerie steeds; it can even duplicate itself. In that poem — eh, what was its name? Long



title — ‘The High History of Good Sir Palamedes the Saracen Knight, and of His Following of the Questing Beast,’ or some such. It gabs on about Palamedes getting himself a faerie steed and hunting the Beast, then it says (and it must be the whiskey making me speak rhymes):

*So that in little drawing near
The quarry, lifteth up his spear
To run him of his malice through.
With that the Beast hopes no escape,
Dissolveth all his lordly shape,
Splitteth him sudden into two.
Sir Palamede in fury runs
Unto the nearer beast, that shuns
The shock, and splits, and splits again,
Until the baffled warrior sees
A myriad swarms of these
A-questing over all the plain.*

See, Palamedes gathers up an army of knights to hunt this duplicated Beast. The cunning Beast returns to one form. By the end of the day, Palamedes has done no injury to the Beast, but has wounded himself and killed several other knights. Now, *that’s* a Beast for yeh. All this before Palamedes finally returns defeated to Camelot, where the Beast “cometh nestling unto him,” and Palamedes has one of these realizations I spoke about before.

Nice idea, hey? I know any number of fae who say, “Ooh, ooh, hope I see the Beast someday.” But what I ask is, what is this Beast getting from this setup? Why does it show up, and how does it choose the sod? Here’s what I say: The Questing Beast is, so to say, a higher aspect of some folks. I don’t say I know many mages, but now and again they talk about an *Avatar* — which, dinna ask me what it is, but it seems to lead mages on a merry chase from time to time. We have nothing like that Avatar among the Kithain, that I know of, but this Questing Beast seems to fill the job well enough.

But so far as these mage folk tell me, chasing after the Avatar, what they call “Seeking,” is not much of a laugh. The Questing Beast is the same way, and that is why I want no truck with the thing. Next!

Merinita, yeh, we’ve all heard of her up here. She was this nature wizard, very close with the sidhe all over Britain, and especially Caledonia. Merinita was top quality, magick-wise, but a bit of a space-head, so they say.

The Battle of Hastings

- 1012 House Díedne mages killed throughout Scotland; their fae allies retreat from humanity.
- 1018 Britons become part of the Scottish kingdom; long-lasting conflict begins with England.
- 1066 Battle of Hastings. William of Normandy crowned.
- 1158 Sightings of Merinita, founder of Hermetic House of the same name, deep in the wilds of the Trossachs (at the border of the Highlands and the Lowlands).

Back around the eighth century, Merinita wandered all over the Highlands, not to mention Britain and most of Europe, seeking “the essential spirit of the land.” She visited most of the fae kingdoms, and wherever she found that “essential spirit,” she left behind what she called a boon. This boon was something that could help mortals understand the fae, sometimes even see them.

Maybe the boon would be some beautiful patch of ground where, if a mortal stepped onto it, he might become able to see the fae. Maybe it would be a tree or rock that, if a couple conceived a child there — and if you get out walking with your love over the heather, you can understand why this impulse might arise — then the child might have the second sight. You hear a hundred addled legends about how Michael Scot was one of these, or King Niall, or High King David even. But the boons are fickle; they move around and vanish for years at a time, or so folks tell me.

Anyhow, Merinita lounged around Europe for a few centuries and then said, “I’ve found the essential spirit of the land, am off, back in a flash, keep me supper warm.” And she hasna been seen since. Except that you hear stories of beautiful animals seen under the full moon of a summer night, and they act strange, though not hostile, and when you see them, you hear beautiful lute music drift in on the wind, music that they said Merinita played in her life. Take that as you like. Me, I’d think that if she’s been listening to lute music for a thousand years, she’s not half-barmy by now, eh?

Aye, right, the Stone of Scone! By God, I was waiting for this one. There in that Stone, mark me, lies all the early glory and ruination and new hope of Caledonia!

It is nae much to look at, really — just a big flat rock. But it is a sacred stone, brought to Scotland ever so many years ago from Ireland, where (I heard) someone carved it from Arcadia’s very essence. There is a powerful Glamour upon that Stone: Whatever monarch takes the crown upon the Stone, they say, may reign free from conquest and oppression. From as far back as anyone in Scotland remembers, our kings were crowned atop the Stone of Scone, in an abbey half an hour’s walk north of Perth in the Lowlands. In all those centuries no army conquered us: not the Romans, not William the Fat in 1066, and especially not the damned English.

Then the mortal King Edward, First Bastard of his English line, having failed to trounce Scotland in a treacherous and unprovoked invasion, scarfed up the Stone on his way south. Friends, from that time Scotland’s fortunes have declined as England’s have risen! For the last seven centuries the Stone has rested in Westminster Abbey in London, with a big throne upon it. And on that throne, above that Stone, every mortal monarch of England has been crowned.

I hear that one of those Traditions, what they call the Celestial Chorus, kept hold of the Stone all that time. Somehow they tapped some kind of magickal force from it, I think; am a wee bit unclear on that. But I know this: The Stone of Scone is the greatest treasure of Caledonia. In stealing it, England gained victory over all mortal Scots, and left the fae kingdoms scrabbling at one another’s throats like a pack of dogs. But when the Stone comes back to us, soon now, the mortals will tell the English to shove off, and the fae shall unite — och, I’m jumping ahead to my

Scottish Revolt

- 1238 HermeticmageMichaelScotfoundstheoldestchantry still extant in Scotland, located in Edinburgh.
- 1296 Edward I invades Scotland, but William Wallace and the French defeat him; Edward I steals the Stone of Scone (Stone of Destiny) and takes it to Westminster Abbey. Tuath Glas Cu, “dear green place,” the ancient magical pool beneath Stirling Castle, dries up.
- 1297 William Wallace defeats English at Stirling Bridge.

rousing finish. Bring me another wee flask of this most excellent whiskey, dear, and let’s have the next slide.

With the Shattering, and the Black Death to boot, the old ways took a hard blow. Perhaps just as well. The sidhe, bless their lacey arses, picked up their skirts and fled for the Arcadian hills — never mind that lord and vassal, I’ll-protect-ye-and-ye-support-me crap. The gates snapped shut behind ‘em, leaving the rest of us high and dry.

Speaking of which, hand me a wee dram of that lovely Macallan, lad. Ahhh. There’s a fine young lad’ll lead a kingdom someday.

And us nockers, boggans, gollachs and whatnot were left in the lurch.

Way I see it, there’s always someone headstrong and clever enough to become a laird, and barmy enough to want to. And, believe me, there were plenty of those wandering about in the Interregnum. Little lairds — mostly nockers and gollachs, some trollfolk — filled the abandoned raths and duns with friends and a few family, and these became the clannns. When they found that fae children were no longer being born to their women, the clannns of necessity started a new naming scheme based on localities. Thus, you have Clann Cairngorm and Clann Tay, but the fae Clann Douglass died out long ago.

Now, it took us some time to climb out of the pit, but we did it because — all together now — “Scots are a resourceful, independent people.” While the English bastards were mocking us about eating oats and killing babies, they were busy murdering themselves. Meantime, we were up here forming clannns, then tuaths, whipping their skinny, oat-lacking arses out of Caledonia under Robert the Bruce and other fine Scottish leaders. Would the English have the bollocks to dismantle an entire castle so it wouldn’t fall into enemy hands? No! Only the Scots! I give you the Scots! Drink up!

Scottish Freedom

- 1314 Led by Robert the Bruce, Scots defeat English at the Battle of Bannockburn.
- 1348 The Shattering. The Black Death. Noble fae flee to Arcadia, others find refuge. Gates to Arcadia are closed. Many trods fade.
- 1349-1969 Interregnum. Burgess clannns flourish.

The Unseelie always took to change better than the Seelie, then as now. A very few months after the Shattering, the Unseelie of the Hebrides and western Highlands formed the Tuath of Shadows. ‘Twas an unruly place — still is, for all that — and dark and scary to mortals.

Worst of ‘em was the Unseelie troll Lord Coruisk, who ran the Shadow Court on Skye — a mean bugger, if ever I heard tell a one. Spoke only in a whisper and had nae more instinct for making friends than a badger. One day, he and Chief MacLeod, of the mortal Clan MacLeod, happened to be hunting the same white faerie boar in the forest near Dunvegan Castle. They see each other, and Coruisk halts his stallion near a fork of the Burn Lochalsh. Coruisk is upset that MacLeod’s hounds have taken down the boar, so he offers the mortal a flag known as the *Braolauch shi*, the Faerie Flag, in return for the boar and one year’s service to the Shadow Court on Skye. The silken Faerie Flag, as you may have heard, can do lots of things, and that includes protecting the host that carries it. From the looks of it, some of you wouldna have minded having it during The ‘69 — the War of Ivy, you Brits call it.

Now, say you’re a mortal, and a shadowy faerie lord offers you a flask of Talisker or some such. What do you do? You take it, because you dinna know what he’ll do if you refuse. So Chief MacLeod takes the Braolauch shi, agrees to the year of service, and arranges to meet Coruisk beside the fork of that burn at dusk. Being an honorable man — though somewhat dimwitted, if yeh ask me — he hangs the Braolauch shi at Dunvegan Castle, tells his loved ones he’ll be off for a year, and disappears into the forest. Mark me now: That year was 1350.

1350 went by, and 1351, and — well, not to yammer on about it, none of his friends nor family heard of him ever again, so they chose a new chief and enjoyed the protection of the Flag. Here I leave off talking of Chief MacLeod, but not for long.

Now, in the Middle Ages (as now), the Highland Seelie dinna abide fae who kidnapped bairns — infants, that is. They wanted to cover their arses, for the last time an Unseelie stole a bairn, the mortals of Dunkeld torched the nearby faerie forest in retaliation. Kidnapping was a sore issue between the Seelie and

The Interregnum

- 1350 Unseelie Lord Coruisk offers the Faerie Flag. MacLeod takes the Flag and disappears onto the Isle of Skye.
- 1424 England’s King Albion dispatches Queen Mope of the Kingdom of Three Hills with her own hair.
- 1503 James IV of Scotland marries Margaret Tudor of England; her brother, Henry VIII, asserts rights over Scotland when crowned, but James IV rebels.
- 1513 English defeat Scots at Flodden Field, where James IV is killed. Scottish fae and mages join fight for independence.
- 1514 The Troth of Argyll, akin to The Concord in America. Troth still upheld, but more uneasily than elsewhere.
- 1542-67 Mary, Queen of Scots, rules Scotland.

the Shadow Folk, and often the excuse we used to pick fights. Another flask, if you would, my dear! My head is starting to heal a bit — dinna want that.

Well, you get Seelie and Unseelie clanns disagreeing over something, and soon you have feuds. And stubborn folk as we are, the feuds went on for centuries, long after the English fae had come to terms. Understand, the Shattering hit not so hard up here; we picked up the pieces and soldiered on, whereas plague, madness and beasties, or chimera as you English call them, devastated the fae down below the Wall. There, the Courts of Shadow and Light needed each other's support, so they called for The Alliance. Not so in Scotland. We didn't reach accord until 1514, with the Troth of Argyll! And even then, peace came only when the English problem spread north into Caledonia.

The problem was, the Scottish mortal James IV had married Margaret Tudor, daughter of Henry VII. The fae up here went quite frothing mad against the idea, because they understood politics; they knew the marriage meant the eventual union of both kingdoms. But it happened. Then after the fat wretch Henry VIII took the throne, James rebelled — too late, of course. He always seemed one step behind; perhaps it was the inbreeding.

The Scots were weak when the battle for independence came at Flodden Field in 1513. And don't forget they lacked the Stone of Scone. So the good Scots army lost and James was killed. Banality began creeping into Scotland, not so fast as later, in the Industrial Revolution, but stealthy, the way lard firms up in a cooler.

And though Mary — so-called Queen of Scots because she was granddaughter of the fool James IV — ruled mortal Scotland until 1567, she was no relief. Her Catholics wanted to sweep out the house, as it were, while her cousin Elizabeth I, along with a fire-and-brimstone preacher name of John Knox, were drumming up support for Protestantism. Neither side could afford room for the old ways. Those were bad times for the fair folk. So we got the Troth of Argyll — a concord of mutual aid between the Caledonian Seelie and Unseelie, foisted upon us by persecution and Banality. No one has broken the Troth, but nae many like it to this day.

Enter Elizabeth I. Both she and her cousin were absolutely the worst sort. Say all you want about glorious Elizabeth Regina, and Shakespeare, and "this sceptred isle" and all that, but Elizabeth was what you may call the alpha-male. After she defeated Mary Queen of Scots, at Langside, Elizabeth imprisoned her — her own cousin, mind — for 20 years, then executed her for treason. That's cold.

Two years later, the *real* history begins.

All this time, the Caledonian fae were busy forming clanns and troths, each with the other, all throughout Caledonia, nae just in the Highlands. Now, when a clann reaches a point where its chief is well-respected, and it's so big that its members nae longer recognize each other, then it's ready to become a — a city-state, as you might say.

In the late 1500s, the clanns begin cutting up Caledonia for themselves. So, here, Clann Tweed formed the Tuath of Thistle, stretching from Dumfries to Edinburgh. Clann Tweed's always been a rough but honest mob, being the gatekeepers, so to speak, of Caledonia and repelling many English invasions. Though the other clanns might grouse about them, they're the clann you'd most want on your side in dire times.





The Renaissance

- 1558 Elizabeth I crowned.
- 1587 Elizabeth executes Mary, Queen of Scots.
- 1589 Fae Clann Tweed forms Tuath of Thistle. In response, Clann Lomond forms the Tuath of Rowan.
- 1590 Smaller fae clannns unite to form Tuath of Caledonia, called the Barbarian Kingdoms by the other clannns.
- 1592 Fae Clann Cairngorm forms Tuath of Alba.

To protect his interests, Chief Speedwell, the randy gossach leader of Clann Lomond, forms the Tuath of Rowan between Edinburgh and Aberdeen in 1589. He and Chief Branoden of Clann Tweed dinna get along, even though, or perhaps because, they represented the two strongest Kithain clannns. To date, there's still some tension, Clann Lomond viewing Tweed as dull and staid, Tweed calling Lomond too uppity and unreliable. Unreliable, indeed. In the past, others have seen both clannns take lands that dinna belong to them, and so regard them carefully.

In 1560, the northern clannns are getting nervous, seeing that glint of land-randiness in the other clann chiefs' eyes. Clannns Duich, Tay, Campion, Tummell, Leyhorn, Morar and Kinlochlinnhe all unite into the Tuath of Caledonia, what the Lowlanders call Barbarian Kingdoms. Even combined, the population of this tuath is far less than that of Tweed or Rowan.

Far northwest, news of the tuaths finally reaches Chief Kin-craig, who declares the Cairngorms, after which his clann is named, part of the Tuath of Alba. That tuath — lovely place, my home, you know — stretches northwest from the Tuaths of Thistle and Rowan. Home to the great clannns, noble, entertaining, appreciate a good whiskey and — what's more! — dinna flinch at haggis.

At this point, feuds began to determine borders, fealties, spoils of entire groups of clannns. For a while, the chiefs understood this and left each other alone. But not for long...

Sometimes justice's served up on a strange platter. Before she died, Mary Queen of Scots, had a son, name of James VI. When Elizabeth I died, Mary's son took the throne, uniting Scotland and England under one crown. Good enough, what with a Scottish king on top, but that wasn't for long, and among the mortals, the reigns of James and his successors led to terrible religious tensions, even worse than those between his mother and the alpha-male Queen Elizabeth.

Excuse me, Rabbit-ears — yes, you, in the back. Either shut your gob or shove off. Yeh, I hear you, I'll get to Chief MacLeod in a moment. Jesus Bloody Christ, I canna hear myself think with you childlings around!

So, in this climate, the fae clann chiefs lost perspective and went, as you might say, a bit fanatic. Take Clann Venue, one of the powerful fae families in the Trossachs, near Loch Lomond. Venue took as its badge, or symbol, the profile of the old sidhe King Eolim — the same bloke who defeated the Blue People centuries before. Now, understand, Eolim had gone away in the Shattering

- 1603 Elizabeth I dies; James VI of Scotland unites Scotland and England.
- 1614 War of the Badge: fae clanns Venue and Uird clash over right to wear emblem of King Eolim.
- 1623 Doissetep's Drua'shi masters murdered in Horizon Realm; Council Seats abandoned. The Hermetic Robert Langloch of Dryburgh Covenant forms plan to build another Horizon Realm for new governing body.
- 1624 Representatives return to Council Seats in Horizon.
- 1625 Langloch and 12 other British mages begin to create Kentigern, an idealized realm filled with beasts and structures from British Mythic Ages. A half-year later, work stops. Langloch and the others disappear. Kentigern also disappears.
- 1626 Mages with alliances to Doissetep shut down movements in Horizon Realm to find Langloch and Kentigern. Maverick mages who attempt same later also disappear or are silenced.

and hadn't been seen on Earth for hundreds of years. But a rival clann, Uird, got all out of joint over Venue's "theft" of Eolim's face.

"He's ours," they said, "he stayed at our freehold all the time when he visited."

Venue said, "You weren't using him, and we're closer to his pure traditional ideals." Arguments, shouts on both sides, insults, and pretty soon they were at it hammer and tongs. Over the next decade, both clanns destroyed one another completely.

So were the clanns really using this badge nonsense as an excuse to attack their enemies? Or were they actually genuinely daft? I dinna know, and I think it nae matter. Och, I've drained this flask, send up another.

It's like bloody James VI set off an avalanche — although, in reality the poor bastard probably dinna know what was happening until some lackey popped the bloody crown on his head and renamed him James I of *England*. Things haven't been the same in Caledonia since, or so I'll tell you if you ask.

James I — or James VI, or whatever you please — dies in 1625, putting Charles I in power. Charles appoints Catholic bishops to the Church of Scotland and causes riots. Thirteen years later, the Scots sign the National Covenant, opposing Charles' Catholicism. In 1688, William of Orange takes the English throne, and the crown passes from the hands of mere barbaric Scots.

Now, to this day, the Highland burghess — the commoners among the fae — have a well-known reputation as scoundrels and thieves, though if you ask me, those two-faced, superstitious Welsh songbirds fit the description better. Why the Highlanders? Two words: Rob Roy. He was the "Robin Hood of Scotland," robbing from the rich, giving to the poor. A proto-socialist. So crofter changelings and wilders looking for a good time — Hear that, Whiskers? Aye, you in the back — joined his band of merry men, raiding rich Lowlanders for food for his clan and making enemies of the Duke of Montrose, who declared them outlaws and torched Roy's house.

After this foul deed, Roy joined the Jacobites and began plundering Montrose's lands. The Jacobites, by the way, were a mortal faction that wanted Scotland for the Scots, and would just as soon have William of Orange squeezed into a breakfast drink. More times than you can say Braolauch shi, the Highlander changelings helped Rob Roy escape from prison, until the Duke was sheer livid. Among those changelings was the famous outlaw Spat Thornconk and his rough band of roguish boggans. Am sure you've heard tales.

Now, listen up, Whiskers and friends — and perhaps you could bring an ailing soul a dram of malt while you're about it — we're back to Chief MacLeod, who we last saw wandering into a fae forest of Skye in 1350 for one year's service to the Shadow Court. Ahhh, thank you, dearie. Oh, and you must know that when MacLeod met Coruisk in that faerie forest near Dunvegal, the fae lord told him he, meaning MacLeod, must do his year's service in Coruisk's form. By this trick, Coruisk meant MacLeod to fight the Unseelie's sworn enemy, Lord Cullen the troll, in hand-to-hand combat.

Now, Lord Cullen was a feared fae lord in the Scottish Highlands, but he was second to Coruisk because he dinna cut as charismatic a figure to the Unseelie wilders there. Nonetheless, Coruisk feared the Unseelie troll, because Cullen had made a standing challenge in personal combat — and the stakes were the very Tuath of Shadows. For every season Coruisk refused the fight, his popularity declined. And it was nae merely that the troll bested Coruisk in every form of combat; 'twas also that Cullen had enchanted himself against all faerie harm.

So in steps MacLeod, a mortal changeling, as it were. Coruisk instructs him in proper Unseelie behavior at court, faerie ways, and so forth, then leaves so as not to be discovered. Most of a year passes, and MacLeod starts feeling comfortable in his role as faerie lord of the Shadow Freeholds of Dunvegal, when Cullen reissues his challenge, as he does every year when the leaves start falling.

Now, MacLeod was not clan chief for nothing. He was a warrior, and well-used to quashing Highland brawls with the fist, nae the tongue. Though nae mortal is a match for a Hebridean-bred Unseelie troll, MacLeod carried himself well in the fight, and at the

The Jacobites

- 1638 Protestant Scots sign National Covenant opposing Charles I's Catholic leanings and condemning all Catholic doctrine.
- 1671-1734 Rob Roy, "the Robin Hood of Scotland."
- 1688 The Glorious Revolution: Parliament deposes Catholic James II; crown leaves Scotland when William of Orange becomes king.
- 1692 Glencoe massacre.
- 1695 Ancient Unseelie Lord Coruisk destroyed in epic battle against Lord Cullen. Beginning of decline of Tuath of Shadows.
- 1707 Act of Union between Scotland & England.
- 1711 MacLeod, chief of his clan, returns to mortal Scotland after a year in Lord Coruisk's realm and retakes Dunvegal Castle.

end he wounded Lord Cullen badly with his iron sword. At that moment, Coruisk's enchantment on MacLeod was broken, and all the fae saw the mortal for what he was. With the help of Shadowin, his lover, MacLeod escaped into a patch of forest belonging to the freehold — though he couldn't find his way back to mortal lands for yet a good while longer, and I'll get to back to him in a bit.

When the Unseelie caught Coruisk, the Shadow Court demanded his apology, but he refused to give it. So now the Tuath of Shadows broke into two factions: the Coruisks and the Cullens. A lot of Coruisk's wilder supporters changed sides, though a few admired his trickery. Armies of trolls, redcaps, nockers, even a few brollachan — the dark Shapeless Ones — joined Cullen in the epic Battle of Castlebay. But Coruisk summoned his boggans, gollachs and redcaps, his minches (the malignant mermen of Minch), his baobhan sith (bloodsucking raven-girls) and the Nuckelavee (the skinless and pestilent half-man, half-horse from the sea). Lightning flashed across the dark coast, and waves crashed against the rocks as Unseelie struggled against Unseelie.

Finally, Cullen brought Coruisk down with a swift blow. As Coruisk lay dying, a howling brollachan consumed him near Castlebay Peak, where to this day you can hear the cold Hebridean wind whispering Coruisk's name.

Cullen took control of the Tuath of Shadows and its army. But without the charismatic leader, the tuath declined, eventually becoming a haven for both Seelie and Unseelie.

Still Chief MacLeod had not returned to Dunvegan. It took him and Shadowin another full month to escape the nightmare defenses of the Shadow Court's freehold. When they got out, it was nae 1351 as MacLeod expected, but 1711, and mortal Scotland was a much tamer and much duller place.

See, Scotland had signed the Act of Union with England. When MacLeod returned, he grew right royally bored. He visited Dunvegan Castle, where the current chief — a Scot in nothing but name — was pandering to the English for more land. Disgusted, MacLeod and Shadowin crept into Dunvegan by night, stole the Braolauch shi, and began to raise an army of good Scots kinsmen. Many believed MacLeod to have fae gifts, and so they supported him. He took the castle with their assistance and ruled there until his death.

Some legends claim that MacLeod took the appearance of the former chief; others say that, out of cowardice, Shadowin offered to make him appear so, and he slew her. My theory is that Shadowin slew MacLeod back in Dunvegan Freehold on the Isle of Skye before he even escaped, and she returned in his form to rule the Clan MacLeod.

Ah, and I knew we'd be talking of the Bonnie Prince today. Little by little, Caledonian changelings were getting fed up with English-this and English-that. Some Scottish changelings even wanted to model the fae courts after the fops and dandies of the

- 1721 First British prime minister.
- 1736-44 The Petalbreast Rebellion, Tuath of Dew.
- 1745-46 Bonnie Prince Charlie, Jacobite claimant to the throne, attempts to unseat Hanoverian George II, but is defeated at the Battle of Culloden.

Highland Turmoil

- 1760s Banality grows in Scotland as first ironworks established, followed by other heavy industry.
- 1780 Highland Clearances begin.
- 1780-90 The village of Mairead is destroyed. Proto-Verbena driven north and found the Wives of the Wood.

English court, which, thank God, never happened. Imagine boggan courtiers dressed like peacocks with trouncy feathers in their caps, and young eshu maidens squeezed into corseted petticoats that push their petite charlies into big fat — *bosoms* — and you get the picture. Quite the spectacle, eh? Their ways were unnatural for a hardy, earthy folk like ourselves.

Then the ruler of the Tuath of Dew, Lady Petalbreast, got from her advisor, the famous sluagh Morag Slipcheek, a prophecy that someone would show up to claim the mortal throne of Scotland. Morag suggested that Petalbreast prepare the people. Lady Petalbreast sent out her subjects to travel among the working classes and the country fae. Nockers, boggans, gollachs and trolls of all shapes and sizes went forth to stoke the flames of Scottish independence. Now they call it "the Petalbreast Rebellion."

Now lots of mages were pouring into Scotland from England at this time. Many of these were what you call Technocrats. Since the 14th century, they'd been busy running down England, and now they were starting in earnest in Scotland. They dispatched mages to kill the changelings who were involved in the Petalbreast Rebellion, and, indeed, caught many of 'em. To this day, we think of those poor Kithain as heroes and martyrs to the cause of Scottish independence.

As Morag predicted, the last of the Stuarts, Bonnie Prince Charlie — otherwise known as Charles Edward Stuart — arrived from France in 1745 to win the throne. The Scottish people embraced him, and many followed along as he marched to Derby. But there the English drove him back to Culloden, where he and his army were defeated.

Now, where most would-be kings would have been killed, Prince Charlie escaped into the Highlands with the English at his heels. Fae legend has it that in Skye, which by now had a balanced population of Seelie and Unseelie, the sweet pooka Flora MacDonald — who, on Morag Slipcheek's advice, had set herself up as maidservant to a mortal woman from Uist — was awaiting the prince. In the spirit of pooka humor, as you might say, Flora dressed the prince in her clothes and spirited him away through Wallace's Walk, the secret network of Highland trods. Forever after, the prince was known throughout mortal and fae lands as Bonnie Prince Charlie.

The '69

- 1969-73 The Resurgence. The sidhe Ross, Baird, Niall and Glynnis carve kingdoms for themselves, but the clans beat off attacks into the Highlands and islands. Tuath of Dew rallies commoners against Ross unsuccessfully, and Queen Rachel is exiled to the Kingdom of Heather.



The Great Wars

- 1788 First convict ships sent to Australia.
- 1792 "Year of the Sheep" during Highland Clearances as farmers buy up tenants' land for livestock.
- 1813-73 Scottish Void Engineer, missionary doctor and explorer David Livingstone. Journeys across Africa three times starting in 1840. Africans kill him in 1873 as he searches for the source of the Nile.
- 1852 Queen Victoria purchases Balmoral Castle along the Dee after Technocrats cause owner to choke to death on a fish bone.
- 1884 Telephones are introduced.
- 1892-93 First Scottish socialist, Keir Hardie, is elected to Parliament and founds Independent Labour Party.
- 1901 Queen Victoria dies.
- 1914 World War I.
- 1920 The Depression. In Scotland, nationalist sentiment strengthened.
- 1930s Scottish National Party formed, advocates self-rule.
- 1939-45 World War II.
- 1944 Oil reserves found off west coast of Scotland.
- 1947 First Edinburgh International Arts Festival begins.
- 1950 Scottish National Party steals Stone of Scone from Westminster Abbey.

That defeat at Culloden marked the end of the mortal clan system, although Highland fae never rid themselves of it until The '69. Adding insult, the English banned the wearing of tartans, the symbol of Scottish independence, for almost 100 years after Culloden. Which leads us to our next topic — Banality.

Ironworks, coal mining, steel production, shipbuilding — not industries filled with Glamour. Well, perhaps shipbuilding. Anyway, all these came to Scotland in the 1760s. Caledonian fae refer to the rise of industry as the Plague of Chimneys, and Scots like James Watt and Adam Smith as the carriers.

With industry on the rise and the old mortal clan ways expunged, the time was ripe for the Highland Clearances. Way it used to be, commoners paid landholding chieftains rent by joining their military. After Culloden, landowners charged tenants ghastly rents; when these crofters couldna afford it, Lowlanders and English farmers bought up the property and bunged the Scots out on their noses. Many mortals and not a few fae emigrated as a result.

Now that's the mortal story. There's also rumors of mages, gossip of the sort that makes you wonder about them — two groups in particular, what you call the Celestial Chorus and Verbena. Well, rumor has it that local Choristers were in a position to help prevent the Clearances, but instead allowed them to happen. They wanted to undermine their rivals, the Verbena, by converting the Highlanders to Christianity. But when all the people got thrown out, both sides ended up losing their power base — for God knows, English lords have never bent their knees to any god but profit.



You must wonder at mages who aim so high, yet end up dispersing their own people across the world and filling their lands with sheep.

Aye! Aye, that was a grand theft! It was a grand and dramatic and momentous and stupendous gesture of nose-thumbing at the Londoners. The Scottish National Party, which have never done a bit of good to that point, stole into Westminster Abbey on Christmas night, 1950, pulled up the Stone of Scone and spirited it away.

There was talk at the time, at least amongst us in the Aberdeen freeholds, that such a marvelous pinching must have needed magic. But nae, am sorry to say it was all mortal doing — the Sleepers, as the mages call them. And they had to give it back a few months later, more's the pity. Still, a grand gesture. When I heard it, I felt all a childling again, dancing and capering about. Like this — oop! Whup! Arr, am a bit muzzy, nae mind. Next.

Well, many of you already know about the Resurgence. Give me a smoke, lad, I dinna care what they say. Mortals started getting interested in possibilities again, they walk on the Moon, they rebel against the authoritarian ideals of earlier decades, they experiment with love, sex, drugs, music, sheep — hah! Nae, just joking.

In an act of cosmic irony, with these improvements comes the embodiment of authority, the sheep — eh, sidhe — who want nothing more than their kingdoms back. Oh, and perhaps fame. Well, and also a little power and maybe some bonnie gollach lasses. And throw in a pound of Dundee cake and some poached salmon. That's all they want. And some fine single malts and haggis might not be bad, either.

So the royals — Ross, Baird, Niall and Glynnis — return. They gather their sidhe and some support from burgess toadies and carve small kingdoms for themselves. Clanns Duich, Tay, Campion, Tummell, Leyhorn, Morar and Kinlochlinnhe, as well as Clann Cairngorm of the Tuath of Alba, resist the royals, keeping the Highlands and islands free of sidhe influence.

Ross kept fighting the other royals and the clanns, but got bugger-all to show for it. Then, after her husband died in 1991, Queen Rachel — you know, of the Tuath of Dew, now part of Dalriada — rallied her commoners against Ross, and lost. Ross bunged her out of Caledonia quick as a flash. She ended up in Castle Windmoor in York under the protection of Lord Olave and Lady Spurn of the Kingdom of Heather, two of the few troll burgess to remain in power after The '69.

Old Ross added the Tuath of Dew to Dalriada in 1992. You can be certain that he has designs on all the other tuaths, maybe even the entire Isle of the Mighty. It falls to the other sidhe, and good folk like King Niall of Alba, to keep him in line, by God.

- 1973+ High King David rules the fae from fortress Tara-Nar (North America); Britain joins the European Community.
- 1975 Oil drilling begins in North Sea.
- 1983 Questing Beast sighted briefly in the Trossachs, near Stirling.

- 1990 ghille dhu of the Pine Stand (Trossachs) invite King Ross and Leyden, Duke of Iron to their Bower; Ross sends Leyden, who returns with reports of wondrous lands to conquer.
- 1992 Reports of ghille dhu, fed up with Ross' attitude, seeking audiences with other fae leaders.
- 1996 Stone of Scone (Destiny) returned to Scotland from Westminster Abbey.

I visited Queen Rachel last year, you know, just before she disappeared. Said she was going on holiday with a mob of Girl Guides. Nae, am only joking. But it is true she hasna been seen for a year.

Och, and here we are again with our good pal, the Questing Beets. Beast! The talk I've been hearing has it that dozens of changelings across Caledonia — every sort of kith in every kingdom — have been struck with visions, and not just after downing a few quarts of fine, fine Scottish whiskey, although God knows we up north can do that with the best of them — hang on, I've lost my thought — ah, the Beast.

Each vision, as I hear it, has the Beast popping up in the usual fashion — one thing I notice is that the creature always looks different, and yet every poor sod always seems quite sure 'tis the Beast — but instead of the I-can-answer-your-questions-if-you-catch-me act, the Beast is talking somewhat different now.

In this vision the poor sod gets a sense that if he catches the Beast, he can restore Caledonia to its former glory. The Tuath Glas Cu — the magical pool under Stirling Castle that's now drier than a sidhe lord's tear ducts — will fill again, and all will be basically right with the world, or the Scottish portion thereof.

But the vision always goes on, and the next part is bad. The poor sod sees a huge dark shape loom up behind the Beast,

a big hulking silhouette, and somehow the poor sod knows this dark shape is called the Hunter. This Hunter has got after the Questing Beast, but the sod never knows why nor how — only that if the Hunter catches the Beast, 'tis awful for Caledonia and all the Isle of the Mighty.

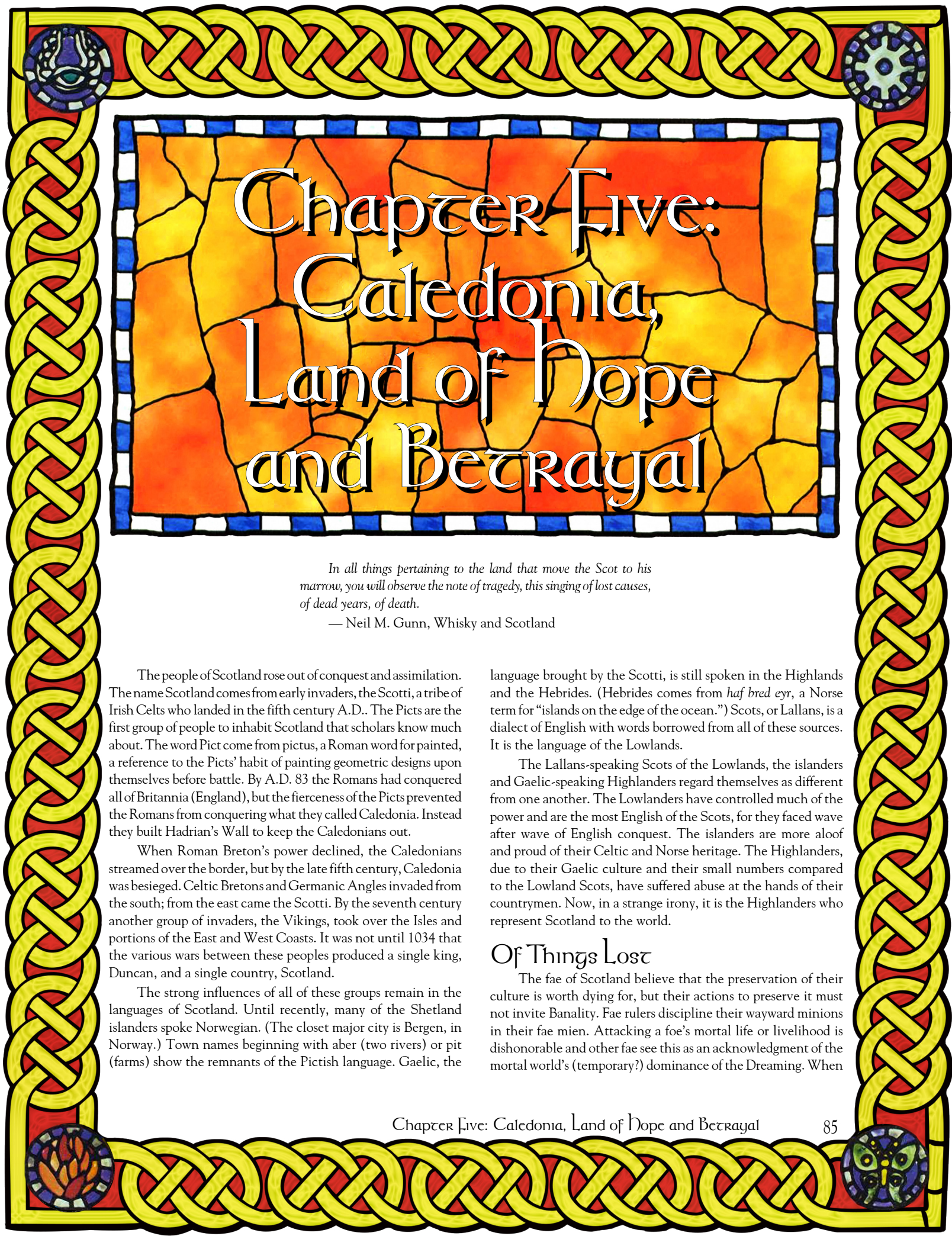
You recall how I said that the sods who get the vision always go off questing for the Beast, and they always find it pretty quick. Well, this last 10 years they haven't. If anyone has happened on the Beast, I've heard none of it. Nor anything of this Hunter, either, though if you want some dark mysterious somebody who means ill for Scotland, I can offer you a long list of candidates, starting with the British Royal Bloody Family and both houses of bloody Barliament — I mean — och, let's finish up, I'm exceedingly pissed.

I see Professor Whosit's timeline takes us right up to the latest headlines. After quite a lot of tedious negotiations with a thousand English bureaucratic bastards in the million-headed English criminal government, and I think some lawsuits too — and there's the signal of Banality if ever there was one — the Scots have at last shamed the bastards into sending back our Stone they pinched six centuries back. I hear it was some Scottish mages in what's called the Order of Hermes that led the fight, all behind the scenes.

By God, I only look forward to getting a true Scottish king or queen crowned upon that Stone — a fae king or queen, and I daresay King Niall up in Alba could be him or her. Aye, aye, you lot back there can shout as you will, but Niall is the one working to make Scotland the land of the Scots! You wait, you lot! That Stone has powers, powers I havena even mentioned. It finds the enemies of Scotland, and it curses them with hunger and misery and bad food and the pox, so *some* people may want a vaccination. Yah, yah, shove off, it's me own talk up here! You turds in Dalriada will shiver in your pansy shoes when Niall has the Stone, it rains *atomic bombs* on the enemies of — here, what's this, am nae done yet! Let go, you bastards! *Scotland forever, by God!*







Chapter Five: Caledonia, Land of Hope and Betrayal

In all things pertaining to the land that move the Scot to his marrow, you will observe the note of tragedy, this singing of lost causes, of dead years, of death.

— Neil M. Gunn, *Whisky and Scotland*

The people of Scotland rose out of conquest and assimilation. The name Scotland comes from early invaders, the Scotti, a tribe of Irish Celts who landed in the fifth century A.D.. The Picts are the first group of people to inhabit Scotland that scholars know much about. The word Pict came from *pictus*, a Roman word for painted, a reference to the Picts' habit of painting geometric designs upon themselves before battle. By A.D. 83 the Romans had conquered all of Britannia (England), but the fierceness of the Picts prevented the Romans from conquering what they called Caledonia. Instead they built Hadrian's Wall to keep the Caledonians out.

When Roman Britain's power declined, the Caledonians streamed over the border, but by the late fifth century, Caledonia was besieged. Celtic Britons and Germanic Angles invaded from the south; from the east came the Scotti. By the seventh century another group of invaders, the Vikings, took over the Isles and portions of the East and West Coasts. It was not until 1034 that the various wars between these peoples produced a single king, Duncan, and a single country, Scotland.

The strong influences of all of these groups remain in the languages of Scotland. Until recently, many of the Shetland islanders spoke Norwegian. (The closest major city is Bergen, in Norway.) Town names beginning with *aber* (two rivers) or *pit* (farms) show the remnants of the Pictish language. Gaelic, the

language brought by the Scotti, is still spoken in the Highlands and the Hebrides. (Hebrides comes from *haf bred eyr*, a Norse term for "islands on the edge of the ocean.") Scots, or Lallans, is a dialect of English with words borrowed from all of these sources. It is the language of the Lowlands.

The Lallans-speaking Scots of the Lowlands, the islanders and Gaelic-speaking Highlanders regard themselves as different from one another. The Lowlanders have controlled much of the power and are the most English of the Scots, for they faced wave after wave of English conquest. The islanders are more aloof and proud of their Celtic and Norse heritage. The Highlanders, due to their Gaelic culture and their small numbers compared to the Lowland Scots, have suffered abuse at the hands of their countrymen. Now, in a strange irony, it is the Highlanders who represent Scotland to the world.

Of Things Lost

The fae of Scotland believe that the preservation of their culture is worth dying for, but their actions to preserve it must not invite Banality. Fae rulers discipline their wayward minions in their fae mien. Attacking a foe's mortal life or livelihood is dishonorable and other fae see this as an acknowledgment of the mortal world's (temporary?) dominance of the Dreaming. When

dealing with mortal foes, Scottish changelings use traditional faerie methods: pranks, treachery, kidnapping, and so on.

Many wilders, especially the bards of the Tuath of Shadows, challenge these priorities. They believe that fighting solely against change and time will doom the fae. They concentrate on engendering a resurgence of Celtic culture in human society by mingling it with elements of New-Age philosophies and faux druidism. Traditionalist fae disapprove of the melange of belief which results; some react violently to these affronts against fae culture.

Scottish history invites a theme of “might have beens” and “could have beens.” William Wallace almost won independence from England in the late 13th century, but was betrayed by Scottish nobles. Yet with this acknowledgment of treachery, there is also hope. Robert the Bruce, a claimant to the Scottish throne, was one of the nobles who turned his back on Wallace, but he later recanted his misdeeds and went on to free Scotland from the English yoke. Unfortunately, English gold has forever tempted the Scots. When James of Scotland took the British throne, he moved his court to England. And along with English land and money, James and his nobles took on English ways.

The English conversion of their nobles diminished much of the Scots’ faith in their rulers. Therefore, a patriotic boast often rings with irony. Too many Scottish rulers have been traitors, too many of their heroes have been betrayed. Throughout their history, the Scots have heard promises from their leaders, but few have been fulfilled.

The Caledonii are often dour and brooding, but remain staunchly determined. Punctuating these dark emotions is an unwavering, blazing love of kin, music, dance and nature. Although the forces of Banality and the Technocracy hold sway over most of the folk of Scotland, there is still an incredibly strong culture which prizes esthetics, faith and dreaming over profit margins and timetables.

The Caledonii hope and struggle, often unaware of how they cooperate. The fight the mages wage against the Technocracy is a fight against Banality. The fae’s engendering of the Dreaming through the preservation of the mythic threads, still strong in Scots’ culture, weakens the Technocracy’s grip on reality. These efforts make Awakening and Chrysalis far more possible.

Scots Pronunciations

- Words starting with *wh* aren’t shortened to just the *w* sound as in American English. The Scots pronounce the *h* by blowing slightly after the *w* sound.
- Words that begin or end with *tt*, *th* and sometimes *t* have the *t* sound replaced with a glottal stop. Mother is pronounced, “muh her.” Other examples are found in: better and butter.
- The *oo* sound is replaced by a sound close to the diphthong *ow*, as in “know.” This is formed by closing the mouth slightly more than normal when making the *oo* sound, and by jutting your lower lip slightly forward.
- Words with *ch* are not pronounced like the American English *ch* sound such as in “church.” To hear this, say the phrase “knock hard” very quickly and you will approximate the Scots *ch*.

Scottish Lexicon

Away — going; “I’m away to bed.”
 Aye — yes
 Bairn — child; “weans” for Glaswegians
 Bide — stay
 Breeks — pants
 Burn — stream
 Cannae — can not
 Chap — knock
 Clach-an-t-seasaidh — a standing stone
 Dinnae — do not
 Gallic — Gaelic
 Greet — weep
 Guid — good
 Ken — know
 Kirk — church, esp. The Church of Scotland (Presbyterian)
 Lad — boy
 Lassie — girl; “quine” for Glaswegians
 Tabhsear — a seer, a person with second sight, a prophet or an enchanted mortal
 Taibhs — a vision
 Tigh-cheilidh — house of entertainment
 Seanachacdh — a storyteller
 Wee — small
 Wode — Angry
 Willnae — will not

Scots Gaelic

Gaelic has three family branches: Scots Gaelic, Irish Gaelic and Manx Gaelic. The speakers of these tongues can generally understand each other, although Manx is probably the most unique.

Gaelic pronunciation is difficult and this is not an exhaustive list. The most difficult are the long vowels (marked with an accent) and the consonant combinations.

Long Sounds	Gaelic Example	English Equivalent
à	bàs	far
ò	òl	lord
ó	mór	more
ù	cù	moor
è	nèamh	where
é	féin	rain
ì	trì	tree
bh, mh		v as in <i>van</i> , silent at the end of words
chd		as in the Scots’ <i>ch</i> sound
dh		gh or y, but silent at the end of words
sh		h as in <i>hat</i>
th		usually silent, sometimes as <i>h</i> or <i>ch</i>

Changeling Lexicon

Fae Cant consists of words from Scots and Gaelic which are used in Scottish fae society.

Cairn — A mound of stones. Cairns are markers or memorials.

Caledonii — The fae use this word to refer to magical beings in general. Usually it describes mixed groups, mages and fae being the most common. Caledonii might also refer to vampires, werewolves, wraiths, formori or hedge magicians.

Clann — Children. The clann was the basic unit of Scottish fae society during the Interregnum. During this time the clans took their names from the lands around them, rather than from ancestors. Even though the arrival of the sidhe diminished the clans' power, most Scottish Commoners still use this term instead of "motley." The unbowed Commoners of the Highlands still exist as clans.

Gollach — A satyr.

Laird — Lord, the person in charge of a freehold.

Rath, Dun — A fae fort or freehold.

The '69 — The War of Ivy, or British Accordance War.

Sitheans — Old fae mounds.

Stane — Stone; usually a single, large stone, erected and often engraved. As with a cairn, it is a kind of marker or memorial.

Tuath — Tuath roughly translates into tribe, but unlike clann, refers to geographical areas, not merely political or familial relationships. The fae of Scotland use it synonymously with duchy.

Dreich and Moor

*Oh for the crags that are wild and majestic,
The steep, frowning glories of dark Lochnagar!*

— Lord Byron, "Hours of Idleness"

Purple heather, green hillock, stony isle and silver burn, the lands of Caledonia are the most feral on the Isle of the Mighty. Perhaps the Scots' dour disposition stems from the realization that the wilderness of Scotland never completely bowed to man's will. Yet, the wilds are also a source of Scottish pride and strength. Many Glaswegians, faced with the blight of civilization, know that they can be in the midst of a wilderness in two hours. Although nature has dealt the Scots a lean hand from which to draw sustenance, they have rarely turned their eyes from their home's "frowning glories." It is in this deep, romantic well of ardor for loch and crag that lies the Scots' greatest hope against the tide of technology and Banality.

Not counting its halo of isles, Scotland is divided into three major geographical regions. Traveling from the southern regions closest to England and heading northward a visitor encounters:

the Southern Uplands, the Central Belt and the Highlands. The forests of the Southern Uplands disappeared under plow and ax centuries ago, but small copses of oak and birch still dot these lands of rolling hills. Elevated sections of moorland are its identifying feature, and they, along with the grassy slopes of the hills, are home to the sheep and cattle on which the farmers depend.

The Central Belt, or Central Lowlands, only accounts for about 10% of Scotland's landmass, but contains about 75% of the country's population. Most Scots reside in cities, and three of the land's most populous cities, Glasgow, Edinburgh and Dundee, all nestle in the Central Belt's river valleys, between the mountains of the Highlands and the hills of the Uplands. Although crops still grow in what was Scotland's breadbasket, damage to the environment and the growth of cities has taken its toll.

The Highlands encompass about three-fourths of the remaining landmass. They compose two mountain ranges divided by a huge valley called the Great Glen, home to Loch Ness. The southernmost and highest range is the Grampian Mountains. They rise from the Central Belt and Ben Nevis, the tallest mountain in Britain, crowns them. These mountains also contain Loch Lomond, the nation's largest lake, and they cradle the Trossachs, one of the most beautiful forests on the British Isle.

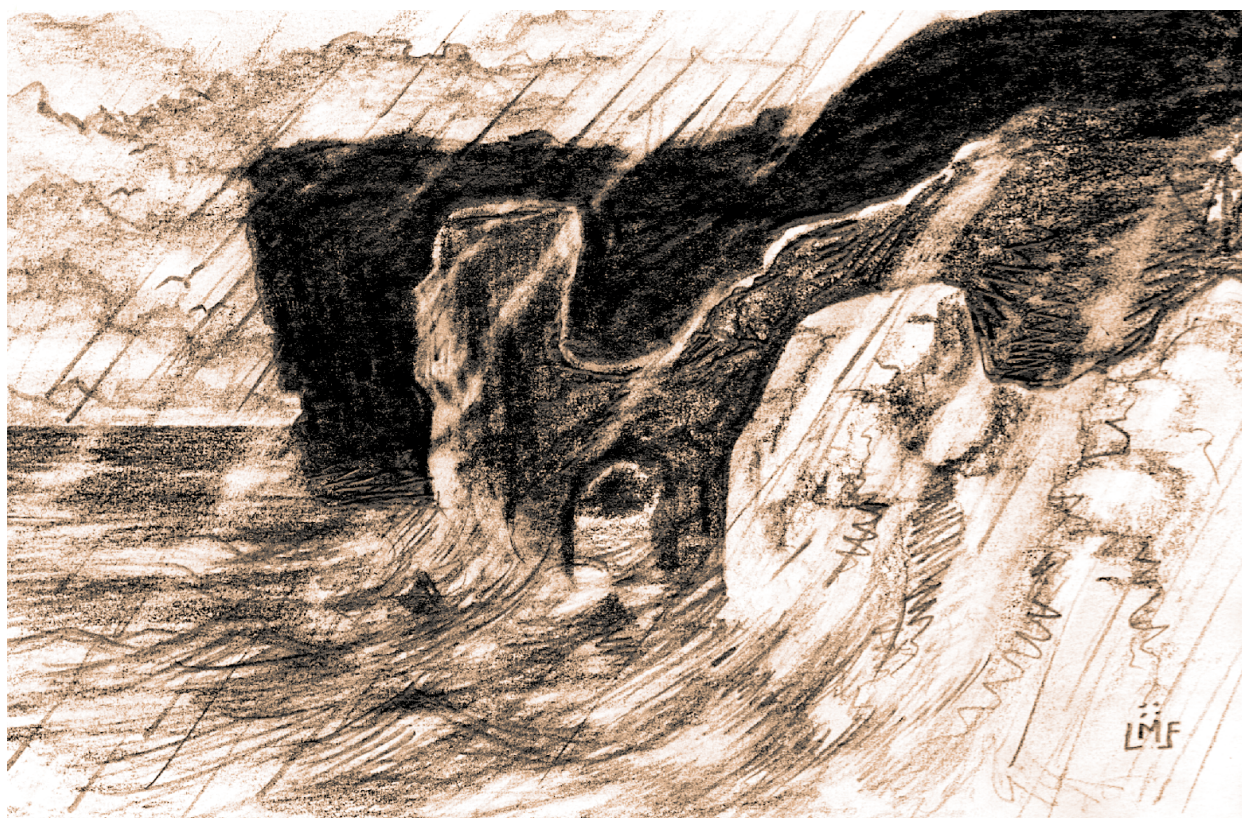
The Northwest Highlands form the northernmost part of the landmass. Rockier than their southern cousins, they rise from the Firth of Lorn and reach northeastward toward the Shetlands. Along the western coastline, the sheltered glens of the Northwest Highlands have seen a lot of development by the timber industry, which has replaced the old, mixed-tree forests with rows of Scots pine.

Just as the mainland of Scotland contains three distinct regions, so can the Isles be grouped into three unique archipelagos. These are: the Hebrides, off the West coast; the Orkneys, off the northeast tip; and the Shetlands, which lie in the same line as the Orkneys, but much further into the North Sea.

Each of the islands has its own traits, but the islands also have a few similar characteristics. Inhabitants of these islands depend to varying degrees on fishing, herding and farming. Along with the often treacherous sea, the islands also have to deal with constant and sometimes brutal winds. Some islands of the Outer Hebrides have 40 or more gales a year!

Scotland lies at the same latitude as Labrador and Moscow and as such it suffers or enjoys the same variances of night and day. Summer nights in Edinburgh last but four or five hours. Unlike Labrador, Scotland is blessed with waters that flow from the Caribbean. Warm, seaborne air flows over Scotland, engendering relatively mild, but wet weather.

This infamous weather is summed up with the word dreich (the drizzly, misty, grayness which pervades the land, especially in the winter). On the Shetlands and Orkneys in the summer, the tourists and islanders still cannot escape the wet. The warming islands and cool seas bring on the haar, a wall of mist that pours off the North Sea and onto the rocky isles.



The Pipes

Next to the kilt, nothing is more associated with Scotland than the pipes. That is why after Culloden, the defeat of the Highland clans, both were outlawed. Pipers were hung for playing their native music.

Pipe music is broken into the *ceol mòr*, "big music" and *ceol beag*, "small music." Most people now refer to the *ceol mòr* as *piobaireachd*, or *pibroch*, but there are quite a few pipers and scholars who might take exception to that. Many Gaelic purists consider the *pibroch*, and even written notation, to be a corruption of the unmeasured Gaelic music. They want pipe playing and pipe-learning to return to its original, oral traditions.

Enough talk, fire up a copy of the Battlefield band or Allan MacDonald!

Lastly, pipes don't scream, groan or moan, they skirl!

Politics

Just as the conservation of natural resources, perhaps at the last moment, has become a matter of acute concern on a worldwide scale, so we in Scotland begin to know and value what we have been, what we are, and what we might have become.

— George Bruce, *The Future of Scotland*

England influenced, but never quite subsumed, the government, economy and religious life of Scotland. The politics

and economy of Scotland are as distinct from those of the other British nations as are its lochs, moors and highlands.

The parliament and prime minister of Great Britain (not England) constitute the highest level of government in Scotland. From there, authority descends to the secretary of state for Scotland, who sits on the ruling British cabinet, and has as his government ministries relating to welfare and the economy. Below this office, the nation is divided into 29 councils, responsible for education, planning, transportation, and health and human safety. These districts fall along geographical and traditional boundaries for the most part, but each of the major cities and island archipelagoes has its own council. The councils are, in turn, broken into wards with equal numbers of electors.

The homerule issue is still a factor in Scottish politics. Although not the majority, the Scottish Nationalist party manages to elect several members to the UK's parliament each session. Occasionally, it pulls off something spectacular. On Christmas Day, 1950, a group of Nationalists stole the Stone of Scone (originally stolen from Scotland by Edward Longshanks) from Westminster, and returned it to Scotland for a few months. As late as 1979, the Nationalists forced a referendum to establish a separate Scottish assembly, but it did not pass. Homerule has once again come to the forefront. In a move to placate the masses, the prime minister of Great Britain has decided to give back the Stone of Scone. It will be interesting to see if this act will quash or inflame the homerule issue.

There are also related political movements to spread the use of Gaelic. Victories have included Gaelic TV broadcasts, schools

and even Gaelic WWW pages. Still, many of the councils of the Isles have been frustrated when they have gone to the trouble of posting Gaelic street and road signs, only to have Lowland government officials print maps in English. The flood of money from North Sea oil had the unexpected result of fueling the home-rule movement. Walls in Scotland now bear slogans such as, "It's Scotland's oil!"

Scotland maintains its own banking and legal system. The Bank of Scotland (Edinburgh, 1695), the Royal Bank of Scotland (Edinburgh, 1727) and the Clydesdale Bank (Glasgow) all issue their own banknotes. Most Scottish businesses require their use, although the banknotes are not negotiable outside Scotland. The highest criminal court is the High Court of Justiciary, and its civil counterpart is the Court of Session. Scottish law is not based on English common law but on the Roman legal system.

Probably one of Scotland's government's greatest achievements is its educational system. Dating from 1696, this system has produced a near 99% literacy rate. Many centuries-old colleges exist in Scotland: Saint Andrews University, established in 1411; University of Glasgow, established 1451; University of Aberdeen, established 1495; and Edinburgh University, established 1583.

The Scottish economy traditionally relied on fishing, herding and farming. Over the centuries it changed to a textile, heavy-industry base, and more recently shifted to high technologies and crude oil.

Less than 20% of Scotland's land has ever been arable. Although some small farming and gardening continues to add to the food supply, the people of Scotland still depend on herding and fishing for much of their livelihood.

Changeling Politics

Caledonia is a broken country. The '69 (the War of Ivy) isn't over; the sidhe quickly fell to fighting amongst themselves. No high king arose in Caledonia, and after eight years of struggle, the royals of Scotland signed the Caledonian Compact. They pledged to fight together should the Sassenach (English fae) come calling.

Ross of House Gwydion, King of Dalriada, is the most powerful noble. He controls both Glasgow, the largest city, and Edinburgh, the most Glamour-rich city in Caledonia. Niall of House Dougal controls the new-money capital of Aberdeen, and has the support of a legion of nocker artisans. Glynis of House Eiluned is the most enigmatic. The Queen of Three Hills controls no major cities, but holds more land than the other kingdoms. Her sorcery and her surprisingly good relations with the commoners keep her kingdom intact.

Ross calls himself High King of Dalriada, and in his kingdom, Dalriada is used synonymously with Caledonia. Ross recently gobbled up the Kingdom of Dew (Edinburgh), and this victory gave him the confidence to claim the throne of Caledonia. Niall claims that Ross' arrogance and treacherous nature keep him from accepting Ross as high king. Glynis has neither acknowledged nor refuted Ross' claim.

Mage Politics

Scotland was once a place of myth and wonder. The early Verbena, the Wyck, raised stone and tree to honor life. They healed the sick and taught those who would be wise. The Hermetic houses formed small covenants to study the true forces of reality. Others came to commune with the fae, or merely sought refuge to study the esoteric arts. Choristers protected their flocks from the demons of the fen and the darker devils of men's hearts. And out of the gorbals of choked cities, they raised shining cathedrals to point men's eyes skyward, to the home of the One.

The Inquisition and Highland Clearances decimated the Traditions in Scotland. (Only mages closely allied with the fae, such as the Verbena, use the term Caledonia.) The Chorus divided; some joined the Technocracy and hunted down members of the Verbena and the scattered Hermetic mages. The Verbena, hiding in the Isles and Highlands, broke off ties with most other Traditions. Other Choristers, unallied with the Technocracy, escaped into the ruined monasteries of the south.

The depredations and betrayals of the past have brought forth a slow rekindling of magick in Scotland. Hollow Ones feign indolence in the Gothic pubs of Glasgow. Verbena eco-terrorists launch raids on Technomancer holdings in the North Sea. The Celestial Chorus funds a chantry of mages in the Lowlands — determined to mend fences with the other Traditions. The Hermetics have never left.

The Technocracy's early victories turned sour. Iteration X's Victorian industrial Utopia in Glasgow sputtered out under pressure from labor revolts and mounds of pollution and mining waste. Two world wars were able to keep it limping along for awhile, but now the Xers' interests have driven them to the automated drilling rigs of the North Sea. The NWO's Technocratic purges of the past decade stripped most of Iteration X's funding away and placed the faction in head-to-head competition with the Progenitors for the very oil fields it helped discover.

The Technocrats in Scotland are feuding amongst themselves, confident in their power. They have strong cells in Glasgow, Aberdeen and in the Murchison oil fields. They have rarely acted in Edinburgh, other than to send patrols to pick up mages who might prove indiscreet at the Edinburgh International Art Festival. Even though the Technocracy's losses might seem a little high in the capitol, it has never made much of an effort to investigate.

Train, Trek and Tube

Scotland is about the size of Maine, so getting around might seem easy. While major roadways connect the larger cities and towns, to get to some of the more scenic sights by car a traveler must travel narrow, winding roads. Many are one-lane roads equipped with lay-bys. When two cars meet, the driver closest to the lay-by must pull over and let the other pass. A motorist traveling on a remote road may also scream around a corner and

encounter a herd of sheep. There are no lay-bys for sheep, and they will most likely be thoroughly unimpressed by a revving car engine or its horn.

Public transportation is the best way to get around Scotland. Extend passes can be had for busses, trains and even ferries (for trips to the Isles). Busses can take a tourist anywhere in the cities and trains lend transport between most cities and villages. Bicycle rental shops can be found as well. Trekking or hiking trips are also popular, and guides or guidebooks are plentiful.

Trods

Ban-Durrag's Squirm is a series of trods connecting the heights of Ben Nevis with the sewers of Glasgow and the crags of Mt. Snowdon in Wales. The Ban-Durrag who control these trods form a group of Unseelie sluagh who use them to hide bodies of their victims and to exchange information. Only sluagh can squeeze through the entrances to these tunnels.

The Clockwork Trod is Niall's greatest achievement. Niall supervised the construction of several chimerical clocktowers in Aberdeen, St. Andrews, Dundee and Inverness. The towers open trods between the cities on a tight schedule. Due to the intricate and capricious nature of the machinery, sustaining the Clockwork Trod is the provender of crews of fae craftsmen. The timetables change from time to time, but it is unknown whether this is due to the whim of Niall, or the machinery.

The Near Isle Trods connect many of the Hebrides: Arran, Islay, Jura, Mull and Skye. These trods are in the hands of Ross of Dalriada.

The Stane Way is either the most elaborate course of standing stone trods, or the biggest hoax Queen Glynis of Three Hills has ever pulled off. Knowing Glynis, it's probably a little of both. Glynis' most loyal nobles (not all sidhe) control the entryways to the trods. If the gossip is true, some of these trods extend from Northumbria to the Orkneys.

Wallace's Walk is a network of trods, the key to the power of the Highland clans. During The '69 they successfully used them to outflank the sidhe forces attempting to take the Highlands. The trod's ancient name has been lost in favor of a commoner hero's, William Wallace. The commoners used this web of trods to speed Wallace away after Falkirk. Legend has it that Flora MacDonald used Wallace's walk to spirit away Bonnie Prince Charlie after Culloden. Although many promises were broken and covenants collapsed during clann feuds, none of the trods are known to sidhe royals.

Scots Festivals and Holidays

While innumerable festivals are held in Scotland, the ones below are some of the most uniquely Scottish; several are of pagan origin. These attract many of the Tradition mages, especially Verbena and Dreamspeakers. Any celebration entices the fae, due to the abundance of Glamour. Storytellers should find these festivals useful events to initiate stories or weave into the fabric of their chronicles.

Hogmany and Ne'er Day (December 31st and January 1st)

The "first footing" marks the beginning of the festivities, when the first reveler steps into the house at the stroke of midnight. According to tradition, this person should have black hair and be a stranger bearing coal, salt and a bottle of spirits. The coal is to insure the warmth of the household and the salt is a charm against famine for the upcoming year, the bottle of spirits is for the party. To many Scots this holiday is more anticipated than Christmas.

Up-helly-aa, Lerwick, Shetland (Winter)

Up-helly-aa marks the end of the Yule festivals and is held on the last Tuesday of January. Due to the boisterousness of the festival, the next day is also a holiday known as "sleeping-off day."

On the night of the festival, a life-size galley is paraded though the town, complete with a Viking crew and *jarl* (baron). Torch-bearing citizens sing old Viking songs, accompanied by brass and pipe bands that line the streets. At the end of the course, they take the ship to a playing field. The Vikings abandon ship and, to the refrains of *The Old Norseman's Home*, hundreds of torches hit her decks, and she erupts in flame. But the night has just begun. The citizens form secret societies of costumed dancers that visit drinking and dancing halls all night long.

Burns Night (End of January)

These festivals honor the Scottish national poet, Robert Burns. Feasts revolving around haggis, whisky and poetry recitals are held all over Scotland to praise this extraordinary poet.

Gyro Night, Papa Westray, Orkney (Spring)

This festival falls on the Tuesday following the first new moon of Spring. Gyro comes from *gygr*, the Old Norse word for ogress. (The gyro would attack islanders at night with huge tangles of rope and netting.) On this night old women visit the homes of young boys after dark and are treated to meals by the boys' families. The crones then ask the boys to escort them home. During their walk home, some of the crones reveal themselves to be older boys playing gyros. They whip out ropes and beat the younger boys who try to escape them.

Beltane Rite, Arthur's Seat, Edinburgh (Summer)

Arthur's Seat is an 800-foot hill behind Holyrood House. On the first day of May, young girls wishing for health, happiness and beauty bathe their faces in the dew accumulated on the hill. This rite stems from the ancient druidic belief in the holiness of dew, especially May dew. Ironically, the young girls who participate in this festival are often on their way to morning Church services at the top of the hill; nevertheless, the Kirk cannot stamp out this old Beltane rite.

Beltane Rite, Cloutie Well, Culloden Moor, Inverness (Summer)

This festival takes place on the first Sunday night in May. The purpose is to cast off ills and cares. The pilgrims wind their way down a path to a glade of trees. In their midst is a well, circled by stones. A pilgrim walks three times around the well sunwise, then tosses in a silver coin. While thinking of her cares, she dips in her hands and drinks. Without speaking, the pilgrim ties a piece of cloth (hence the name *cloutie*, cloth) from her clothing to a tree nearby and leaves before sunrise.



Procession of the Burryman, South Queensferry (Summer)

The Burryman Procession probably dates back to rites representing the Green Man, a figure embodying a scapegoat for the town's sins, and therefore a figure of renewal. During the festival, a man dressed in flannel is covered with burr thistles. This Burry Man is escorted around town by two attendants who take collections from whomever he calls upon. The Burry Man then leaves town, ceremonially taking with him the evil influences of the community. Participating youths split the money collected in the Burryman Procession.

Riding of the Marches (June-August)

Usually begun with parades of pipes and brass bands, these festivals commemorate the wars with England. Towns along the English border stage their own particular rites, but during all festivals, one or more horses are ridden to the English border and back to demonstrate the people's loyalty to Scotland.

Ceilidh, Anywhere, Anytime

Ceilidh (KAY-lay) comes from the Gaelic word meaning "a visit," but now refers to a party involving traditional dance and music. Unlike many other traditional events, ceilidh are informal. People go not only to look and listen, but to dance and sing. These parties are extremely popular, and pubs and public halls all over Scotland have ceilidh nights (called ceilidh dances in the Highlands) on a regular basis. Formal competitions of Highland dances and singing are called mods.

Scottish Superstitions and the Sloinneadh

Scottish superstitions are extremely important to the mages and fae. Both of these groups have vested interests in keeping folk beliefs alive.

In the early 1970s, Alasdair, bard to Queen Glynnis of Three Hills, invited all the fae heads of state to a meeting on the highest peak of the Eildon Hills. On the grassy slopes, he and six enchanted mortals told the greatest of the tales of mythic Caledonia and thereby recounted hundreds of superstitions. After 20 hours of tale-spinning and singing, they stopped and told the fae that without their help, all of these tales could die, and with their help they just might live anew. Alasdair then outlined a code of behavior for the fae of Caledonia. In order to preserve what was left of the old tenets, he asked the fae to act in ways to strengthen the old superstitions and fables which still existed. If this was done the last vestiges of the Dreaming would not die. In honor of their fae and human ancestors, this code was called the Sloinneadh (sloynu), after the traditional Gaelic recitation of one's ancestors.

Storytellers can use the places, legends and practices below to lend a Scottish flavor to any chronicles that involve Caledonia. Storytellers should also note that the word "fairy," below, indicates human interpretations of the fae or changelings. The fae are not necessarily bound by these attitudes or traditions. Wise mages use these legends to make their magick coincidental when dealing with persons who are superstitious.

Clean Arteries are for Doufs: Scots Food

The traditional Scots breakfast consists of mounds of toast and marmalade, bacon and eggs, kippers and tea. Dinner or "tea" is usually centered around the potato, often made into chips like the English chip. The tea table groans with mutton pies, sausages, bridies (meat and potato pastries), and red, white and black (blood) puddings.

The wonder which is haggis is made of the heart, lungs and liver of a sheep, ground with beef fat and then soaked overnight. The next morning this concoction is mixed with oatmeal, onions, seasonings and gravy, and then boiled in a sheep's stomach. Traditionally, haggis is served with clapschott, a mixture of mashed potatoes and rutabaga.

Scots balance this love of grease and fat with an uncontrollable lust for sweets. Griddles are used to make delicious oatcakes, bannocks and butter scones. The bakers' ovens produce prodigious quantities of shortbread, fruit cakes and black buns (a sweet bread eaten at New Year).

No wonder the Scots have an incredibly high incident of people pitching over in the streets from massive coronaries. They have but one hope for their cares, or their arteries, the uisge beatha, the water of life — whisky.

Glenfiddich, Glenlivet, Glenmorangie...these and other single-malt miracles pour out of the Highlands like mana from Heaven. Only the secret combination of malted barley, peat, Highland spring water and the minimum eight years of aging produces Scotch.

Bannock — The bannock is the traditional bread of Scotland. To prepare it in the classical way, it is kneaded sunwise into a disk, with a hole in the center. It is then baked on a stone heated on a fire. Bannocks, and the stones they are baked on, are often regarded as charms against evil and it was generally regarded as profane to waste a bannock in the old days. Daughters passed the bannock stones on for generations as wedding presents.

Clach-an-Tiompian — Gaelic for "Stone of the Lyre." Clach-an-Tiompian are standing stones that produce musical notes when struck or when wind blows around them. Folklore states that ringing a Clach-an-Tiompian summons the faeries.

Colored Thread — Witches use colored thread to imbue curses; while common folk use them as protection from black magic and the fae. In one case, a jilted lover caused impotence in her old lover by tying three pieces of different colored thread into three knots.

Corp Creadha — Gaelic for "clay body." The corp creadha are wax or clay bodies used by Scottish witches as voodoo dolls. They could inflict pain or death, but unlike voodoo dolls, the corp creadha are useless against persons with missing limbs.

Cuach — A wooden bowl filled with water used to sink boats or drown swimmers. The witches of Lewis placed small effigies of boats in bowls and agitated the water as they chanted their spells. When the effigies sank, the real boats capsized and everyone drowned.

Eóas — These are charms against evil. They usually consist of a chant, usually spoken by a healer, and some other anti-magical material. Some common things that prevent evil magic are drawn swords, iron, juniper wood, stale urine, rowan wood, stallions, pins boiled in milk, and mothan (pearlwort). Burning brands carried sunwise around a home would ward it from evil influences.

Fairy Etiquette — For some reason fairies consider it insulting to be thanked by humans for their good deeds. They especially find it insulting if they are merely repaying a service done for them. It is also believed to be improper to speak to a fairy host if taken by free will. Speaking in these circumstances causes a fairy to return the guest to the place of abduction.

Fairy Food — Eating a fairy's food places a person under her power.

Fairy Houses — Fairies are, of course, supposed to dwell under hillocks, but in Scotland the people believed they also lived under stone hearths, or sometimes under houses. The subterranean houses with stone slabs for roofs and piled stones for walls, discovered in England and Scotland, were believed the houses of fairies. Their name, pech houses, also hints that they might have been used by the Picts.

Fairy Stock — The fairy stock is an image of a fairy victim, usually made of wood, moss or wax, which the faery leaves in place of the person it kidnaps. If the person is successfully spirited away before the stock is destroyed, the fairy stock animates and becomes physically indistinguishable from the original person, a doppelganger. This "stock" person usually sickens and dies fairly quickly since people who know the original will begin to notice his quirks.

The Knife in the Door — If asked into a fairy's dwelling, sticking a knife into the door prevents the fairy from keeping the guest captive.

The Good Neighbor — The fairies of Scotland always return favors and often help deserving persons without being asked. They always repay their debts, so the fairies are known as The Good Neighbors.

Heather Ale — The brewing of heather ale was a secret known only to the Picts, and their secret is said to have died with them. The ale gave second sight (enchanted mortals) and was much prized by the fairies for this reason. The last two Picts, a father and son, came before the king of the Scotti who demanded that they tell him the secret method. The father told the king that he would not tell unless the Scotti killed the man's son. The king immediately plunged a spear through the young man. After the father was sure of his son's death, he spat on the king and told him that he thought his son was too weak to withstand their torture, but he was not. They could torture and kill him but he would die with the secret. He was right.

Milk — Witches and faeries often steal milk from cows, transferring it to the their cows or their cauldrons. Milk could also be stolen by milking the *slabhraidh*, the pot-chain used to hang a kettle over a fire.

The Whirlwind — Whirlwinds are supposed to mark the passing of fairies. If you're quick, and can throw your left shoe, a knife, dirt from a molehill, or your bonnet into the whirlwind, the faeries will drop what they were carrying. Othertimes, the faeries interfering mortals some kind of gift or curse. Whirlwinds under faery

power also carry people off. Donald MacCrimmon, the legendary founder of the MacCrimmon piping school, supposedly received his famous piping ability by tossing his bonnet into a whirlwind.

Kingdom of Dalriada

The enemies of Scottish Nationalism are not the English, for they were ever a great and generous folk, quick to respond when justice calls. Our real enemies are among us, born without imagination.

— R.B. Cunninghame Graham, *Speech at Bannockburn*

To Lady Glynis, Queen of the Kingdom of Three Hills, and whatever else you want to call yourself. My name's Angus MacSporran, but you can call me Anguish. It's what me lads call me. I was whelped near Glen Orchy and Sained when I got back from the Falklands. Since that time, I've sold myself to that grand prick Ross and his enemies as a fighter and to you, Queenie, as a spy. (I figure you not to be offended by such talk, lass, since you were smart enough to know that the sidhe around here wouldn't catch on to a redcap being a spy.)

Where should I start? With Ross, of course. I gotta give King Ross credit. He's as good a killer as House Gwydion's ever to produce. Hell on wheels during the first weeks of the War of Ivy. He led most of the battles himself. He even chased Captain Jock Mungo, the old nocker who Sained me, and the lads of the Glaswegian Defense Union, strait through Glasgow and into the Clyde.

Speakin' of fight, me favorite subject, you've probably heard a lot of lies about what happened at the Battle of Dew and Tears four years ago, but I'll set you straight, Queenie. When King Baird of the Kingdom of Dew died, Ross produced a letter, supposedly in Baird's hand, naming Ross as his heir. The nobles of the Kingdom of Dew sided with Rachel, Baird's wife, against Ross. Ross responded by immediately declaring war on the "rebels."

Now I'm not saying that the letter was a fake fer sure, but Duke Leyden, Ross' right hand, hired me and a bunch of mercenaries a few months earlier. He didn't say much at the time, other than it was for work in the future. I'm sure he had the war in mind.

Getting back to me tale, the armies met outside of Falkirk, and boy I was slaverin' for a good heave-to when out rides Leyden and begs for a contest of champions to settle the fight.

"To spare the fae host," he says.

"Spare his noble cheeks," says I.

Me and me mates howled and would have started forward at this, after all it was a beautiful night for a beatin' and a bleedin'. But no, the damn sidhe captain in charge of the Highland shock troops ordered us to stand our ground. You know how damn hard it is to follow even the most disgusting of your kith's orders! We livened up a bit when Rachel asked for the duel to be to the death!

Anyway, some yahoo from the Kingdom of Iron rides out and the same goes for Rachel's side, and they take to that dancing about, tricky crap that passes for fighting for the sidhe. They swing their dainty little swords until the lad from the Kingdom of Iron takes a good one in the head. He rips off his helmet and damn if ain't Ross himself! It must

have stunned the knight from the Kingdom of Dew as well. He didn't move when Ross lopped off his 'ead.

By the time I stopped laughing, half the nobles from the Kingdom of Dew had piled their arms at Ross' feet. Rachel lost and King Ross rode off the fields of Falkirk at the head of two armies!

I got bored with all the bowing and honorifics, collected my pay and headed for the Bearded Lamb in Falkirk town. After all, Ross was buying.

— Anguish MacSporran, *Redcap's Diary*

Dalriada forms a great crescent in the heart of Caledonia. From its eastern tip gathered around Edinburgh, it sweeps west and north, skipping the Highlands, and encompasses the northern tip of the Isle of Lewis. The commoner clanns of the Highlands imagine this shape as the jaws of a great beast, poised to gobble them up. It contains three tuaths (duchies): Dew (Edinburgh), Iron (Glasgow) and Shadow (Skye and the Hebrides).

Dalriada is the most powerful kingdom in Caledonia. Its mortal and fae population dwarfs the two other kingdoms'. Although many commoners fled Dalriada's cities during the initial rush of the War of Ivy, the Dreamers amongst the mortals lured many back.

King Ross means to rule all of Caledonia. His agents regularly scout the Highlands, trying to find the secret to its trods. (Many do not return.) Through skill, luck and guile, he has quadrupled the size of his kingdom. Supposedly to honor his efforts, his nobles (and other arse-kissers) call him High King of Dalriada, using the name of his kingdom synonymously with that of Caledonia.

Everyone schemes in Dalriada. The matrons of Ross' court advise him to marry Glynis, the Queen of Three Hills, the southernmost kingdom in Caledonia. His war leaders plan for a sidhe-led invasion of the Kingdom of Alba and the Highlands. The bards of his court sing of the beauty of Anghorad and Gwirly, causing a stir as the nobles debate the consequences of having a Welsh queen and adding Welsh bowmen to Dalriada's army. All the while, Leyden, ruler of the Tuath of Iron, slips further into grumpdom and into the shadows of the Unseelie. How faithful will Ross' best friend and closest advisor be to his lord? How promising is his advice for the future of Dalriada?

The Tuath of Iron

The King awoke
when lightning fell
and thunder spoke
To whom once was man
The lightning fell
From sky to hand

— from Dealanach's Fall, Ashe, Bard of Shadows

Generally speaking, The Tuath of Iron includes Argyll and the old industrial heartland gathered around the banks of the Clyde. The borders of Tuath of Iron run from Isle of Mull southward along the A16 toward the Isle of Bute and into the Firth of Clyde. Heading east, the region skirts the forests of the Trossachs, then falls south, gathering in Cumberland and Strathhaven. The

A71 marks its southern boundaries at the Kingdom of Three Hills and the Irish Sea.

Argyll is derived from *Araghaidal*, Gaelic for “boundary of the Gaels.” Ross took the name for his kingdom from the ancient Gaelic kingdom of Dalriada, the foundations which were laid in the lochs, isles and firths of this country. His human seeming was born in Kilmartin, in Argyll, and it was there that he began his part in the War of Ivy. The bards of his court sing of his Saining at the ancient ruins of clan MacArthur on Inishail isle in Loch Awe. At the moment Ross awoke, there was a bright flash and his greatsword, Dealanach (*lightning*, Gaelic), fell from the sky. With this tale and Dealanach, Ross gathered the sidhe of Argyll and the inner Hebrides into a fearsome force.

After the sidhe of Glasgow fled north, Leyden and his followers found rest and leadership in the mighty sidhe of Argyll. Ross led them back to Glasgow where they defeated the enemy and took control of the city and its environs. Many say that soul of the fae Kingdom of Dalriada lies in Argyll, but its heart is Glasgow.

Glasgow

Glasgow isn't the town it used to be. There were more gorbals (slums) and more dirt, but the humans and sidhe have scraped off a few layers of honest grime and replaced it with knick-knack shops and Yank tourists. They call it Britain's most Victorian city. But, there's still enough decay and old ironworks in this town to make most sidhe wet their lace knickers, and that makes me happy.

— Anguish MacSporran, Redcap's Diary

Glasgow lies on the banks of the Clyde. The northern bank is generally more upscale than the southern and is divided into George Square, Merchant City and the East and West Ends. George Square and Merchant City are the heart of north bank and contain the seat of local government, and several colleges, including Glasgow University, and the School of Art. The East End lies alongside this wealthy region and tends to correspond to most people's stereotype type of Glasgow. It is run down and fairly depressing. Its two brightest spots are Glasgow Cathedral, which dates from the 1100s, and Glasgow Green, purportedly the oldest park in Britain. Glasgow Green hosts The People's Palace, a museum extolling the virtues of the citizens. The back of this Victorian, brick building adjoins the Winter Palace, a Victorian greenhouse. On the other side of George Square is the West End. This is the home of Glasgow University, Huntington Art Gallery, Kelvingrove Park and Kelvingrove Museum. Students dominate this side of town, and many say that they have no need to venture further into Glasgow than the West End. The students also support the nightclubs, bookstores, stimulating cafes and avant-garde shops of nearby Byres Road.

The southern bank has the same contrast of rich and poor. Crowded on the banks of the river are three underprivileged neighborhoods. Govan, the farthest west, has never recovered from the decline of the shipping industry. Ibrox is home to the rowdy Protestant Rangers football team. Gorbals, whose name has come to mean slum, lie further east. The Southern Bank has not shared in the rejuvenation of the Merchant City. South-

ward lies the concrete suburbs of Glasgow and the incorporated townships, such as Rutherglen. This area is much more wealthy, but is not rich. It is also the home of Pollock Park, Haggs Castle and Hampden Park.

Many fae cluster around the Glamour-filled West End. The art galleries and Dreamers of the Byres Road area allow this part of town to support several freeholds.

The leaders of Dalriada gather at George Square. *Griffin's Rath*, Ross' palace, is there, facing the City Chambers. Its mortal seeming is a real-estate office, but the Kithain can see tower after tower with gargoyle falcons and lions peering over the street, clawing their way toward the heavens. The palace is terrifying and majestic. Godfrey Makintosh, the nocker who built it, calls it Phallo-Gothic-Victorian. Ross' flag, which is bigger than a Barras' Street lorry, flies above it all. On it, a Golden Griffin clasps Dealanach. But as impressive as Griffin Rath is, it is the real-estate office which does the most damage. Ross makes it a point to own most of the Glamour-producing places in his kingdom. He even owns the notes on most of the freeholds. As you can guess, most of the Kithain dare not offend him.

From his palace under the Winter Gardens, Duke Leyden runs the day-to-day business of the Tuath of Iron. Leyden was once Ross' favorite, but a rift has grown between the two of late. Most of the nobles attribute this to Leyden's now-open association with the Unseelie, but other rumors circulate. Many believe that Leyden now envies his old friend. He seems to have reason. Leyden has become a grump, while Ross clings to his wilderhood. Leyden's Ban-Durrage consort also seems to have abandoned him for the king's bedchamber.

This new sluagh advisor is starting to ruffle the nobles of Griffin's Rath. The sluagh's presence and Ross' lack of queen, much less an heir, are the king's biggest shortcomings in the eyes of the nobles of Dalriada.

The Ban-Durrage

Although I haven't been to the Highlands in awhile, I always heard stories of the Ban-Durrage, the sluagh witch-women who live in the holes and crevices in the stone. When the people built the first sewers, the Ban-Durrage found hidden passages through the roots of the Earth and connected their grottos in the Highlands to the stink of the cities. They watched. They listened to the wailings and whining, and sometimes they struck. Leyden made contact with them in the sewers of Glasgow. What favors he did for them even I don't want to know, but one named Gruach was sent to spy on Ross. Who knows, it may have been Leyden's plan all along, but now there's talk of Gruach being seen at court, only in the shadows mind you, but still.... Well, I've always heard that sluagh may not be pretty lovers but they are flexible.

— Anguish MacSporran, Redcap's Diary



Tinker's Damn

She and I have an understanding. I call her "puss-wog," and she calls me something in Gaelic which means "fatherer of sheep." (I've got to study my native tongue some more; there's some lovely cussin' in it.)

— Anguish MacSporran, *Redcap's Diary*

Lorna Barnes, a grump nocker, owns one of the few freeholds to make it through the War of Ivy untouched. After the sidhe routed the Glaswegian Defense Union in The '69, she calmly marched back into Glasgow and put out her "open" sign.

Lorna specializes in music machines. These chimerical monstrosities incorporate Lowland pipes, drums, whistles, organs, tambourines, fiddles and harps all caterwauling at the same time. At the worst of times they sound like a gollach tied to a tree just in sight of an orgy, but when they are working in harmony, the sidhe nobles clammer for them.

The Shadows' Market

Oooch, that place will make a redcap's short hairs stand up and salute! A bully, killer or thief can always find an employer there.

— Anguish MacSporran, *Redcap's Diary*

Every new moon the Unseelie gather in a new location for a marketplace of thievery, plotting, scandal mongering and generally as many low-down forms of commerce as one might suspect. The Shadows' Market has only allowed Unseelie sidhe into its enclave of late, and it is are forbidden to bring others without permission, and they may not use any of their noble Arts.

An Unseelie satyr named Fearchar runs the market, and his whispered commandments are law under the moonless sky.

Terminus West

"Levis? You want a costume shop, Chucky. We specialize in Schrodinger fashion. Fashion is what you conceive it to be.... If you don't have the brainpower, let your mum dress you — I won't."

— Trellis McGavin, *Hollow One*

Terminus West is unobtrusive from the outside. It seems like one of the several other red-brick storefronts on Byres Road. But step inside and you are confronted with Malaysian and African totems and neon lights that run the length of the store. Tin panels are bolted to the floor, and the walls are festooned with loose Christmas lights and posters from local bands. Books on philosophy and non-Western religion peer out between stacks of folded clothes. Bolts of cloth and newspapers spill over the tops of rickety tables salvaged from bins around the local campus.

Wander around long enough, and Trellis, a middle-aged black woman, will grill you on your beliefs. If you pass her muster as an open-minded and intelligent person, she just might sell you a book or make you some clothes.

Trellis is a Hollow One, although she prefers to call herself a Constructivist. She is the titular head of a group of four other Hollow Ones who live in the West End. She knows of the strong fae presence in Glasgow, but only knows Anguish personally. One of her favorite customers is Agnes Ranald, a Brujah. Her visits ensure debates that go long into the night. Trellis is eager to find out more about the Kindred in the city.

The Tuath of Dew

Into your hands I place the jewel of Dalriada, the flower of Caledonia. In my name I charge you to guard and nurture its Dreamers well.

— King Ross of Dalriada, *The Investiture of Duchess Flora*

The Tuath of Dew extends from Falkirk and Quothquan to the west, to the Firth of Forth, and along the southcoast to the Moorfoot Hills, where it borders the Kingdom of Three Hills.

Edinburgh

Edinburgh is even more lousy with tourists than Glasgow. You can't swing a dead boggan without bringing down a couple of Yanks, a Jappo, two street performers and a pickpocket.

— Anguish MacSporran, *Redcap's Diary*

In the middle ages Edinburgh was called Dunedin, or Din Eidyn (fort of Eiden), and still has a strong medieval quality. The heart of Edinburgh is divided into Old Town and New Town. Old Town includes the daunting Edinburgh Castle, which is situated on the craggy remains of an ancient volcano. Although most the streets of Old Town are known for winding routes, The Royal Mile (and it's almost exactly a mile) is a straight shot linking the castle with the queen's residence, the Palace of Holyroodhouse. (The holy rood is a cross of gold within an ivory figurine of Christ. It purportedly contains a piece of the true cross.) Down from the castle is the Witches Fountain, which marks the spot where hundreds of women met their fiery doom. Further still is the Scotch Whisky Heritage Centre, where anyone can learn the history and techniques of Scotland's pride and joy. The High Kirk of St. Giles, where the Scottish Kirk began, lies nearly midway down the Royal Mile. Past the queen's palace is Holyrood Park, which is a bit of the old wilderness that once surrounding Edinburgh (including loch, crag and moor).

New Town is a little older than the United States, and is laid out in an impressive grid system. Its buildings tend to be either Neoclassical or Victorian. This section of town contains many of Edinburgh's important art collections: The National Gallery of Scotland, The Scottish National Portrait Gallery and the Scottish National Gallery of Modern Art.

Salon de Flora

Ahh, the fragrances of your blooms under starlight, the dulcet cantata, the colors flashing to life by candlelight. Bless you, mum, for these lingering moments of rapture.

— Iolaire MacDonald, Toreador Lieutenant to Duchess Flora, after one of her candlelight suppers

Salon de Flora is an upscale flower boutique run out of a Georgian storefront off Princes' Street. Behind the store is a formal garden where Flora Sinclair entertains the cream of Edinburgh's society. Flora is the Duchess of Edinburgh, but she makes little pretense of her court. Except for a few fae confidants, there is staff. A consummate organizer and hostess, she juggles Ross' agents, Glynis' spies and even the servants of the Toreador prince with ease. An invitation to the Salon de Flora is an invitation to an artistic event, a banquet of Glamour. If a fae is lucky, he might carry away one of Flora's dross-leadened orchids.

Covenant House

Yes, I've been to Covenant House! It's in the Old Town, just off the Royal Mile. Take a left onto Castle Wynd, then look for the fourth alley, or was it the second? No, it's in Cannongate, right passed the.... What did you ask me again?

— Uninnseann, Bard of Shadows

The Covenant House's arcane nature renders it unnoticed but to the mages who make it their home. The house is a simple beam-and-lintel Tudor-style building. Five mages and their apprentices carry out the work of the Auld Covenant from its charmed walls. One curious effect of the place is that the longer one stays, the longer one can remember how to return. The mages who have lived here for years can leave for weeks at a time, but many a young apprentice has had to be found and escorted back when they have strayed too long. A room on the second floor that looks out on the street was once Michael Scot's room. This room is left empty should the chantry's founder ever return.

Gollach's Ceilidh

*The horny gollach's an awesome beast,
Souple an' scaley;
He has twa horns an a hantel o' feet
An a forky tallie.*

— Ancient Rhyme inscribed on the door of Gollach's Ceilidh

Located off Cowgate, this pub and performance space is a favorite among the fae attending the Fringe Festival. The front door is carved oak with a rather ribald engraving of a satyr. The pub snakes around the innards of a large block of buildings. When wandering its depths, new customers are always surprised when a narrow passage suddenly opens up into another stage area or bar.

This freehold is owned by Baron Orson Monro, a satyr with more musical connections than Ossian. He pulls in first-rate acts from all over Britain, Canada and America. During the festival, the Gollach's Ceilidh usually runs two to three acts a day. Since many of the performance spaces can be rented for private gatherings, his place often hosts mods staged by the Bardic College, and the team of The Hallows. Baron Orson Monro holds court in a private stage behind the main bar. There, basking in the limelight-balefire, he settles disputes and gives private performances of his own plays and songs.

The Edinburgh International Festival and the Fringe Festival

The Edinburgh International Festival is actually a combination of many smaller festivals: Edinburgh Book Festival, Edinburgh Film Festival, Edinburgh International Jazz Festival, Edinburgh Children's Festival, Edinburgh Folk Festival and Edinburgh Science Festival. If the events of these festivals aren't enough, the Fringe Festival attracts thousands of avant-garde performers, theatre groups and artists.

The festival has grown since its beginnings in 1947. The Fringe Festival alone stages more than 600 performances each year. Each night of this month-long event is capped with a traditional military tattoo at the castle. Pipe bands from all over the world perform at the tattoo, along with Highland dancers and singers.

The Auld Covenant

Lesson 1123: A Testament of Knowledge and Dedication

In accordance with our chantry's laws, I hereby submit a statement of our history and dedicate myself to the ideals of our founders: Michael Scot, Mary Hay and Phillipe Clemenceau.

In the late 1300s, Michael Scot, a member of the Hermetic House Ex Miscellanea, settled in Edinburgh, planning to use the city as a base of operations for his studies of the mystical sites in the area. An avid astronomer, he wondered if the movements of the stars and constellations were behind the frequent shallowings he detected at several sites in the city and in the Borders region.

Scot's scholarship and personality allowed him to form strong connections with both practitioners of the Wyck in the Highlands, and with other Hermetic Orders in Paris and London. He helped the members of the Wyck, and they exchanged knowledge of their Life magicks. Eventually, he attracted students, and they formed the Auld Covenant. Together they completed the first edition of *Scot's Almanac of Shallowings*.

The Auld Covenant thus began its first mission: to know the habits of the shallowings and to protect the Sleepers from the beings that might harm them. Through their will, the members managed to defeat several Umbrood and diabolists in the area. Although many stories of Michael Scot spawned during these times, the covenant was never discovered. Strangely, no written or oral records of his physical description exist, even though the people of Edinburgh and the Borders seemed familiar with the man. (Reference: *The Arcane of Michael Scot*, 1621 by Evelyn Davies.)

In the late 1400s, the Grand Convocation's ordering of magick into Spheres frustrated the Auld Covenant, since most of the mages were practitioners of Spirit Arts. Scot, always a pragmatist, sent his students out to find a Hermetic Master of Forces. The quest ended a few years later when Mary Hay, the youngest member of the Auld Covenant, tracked down Thomas Weir. Weir was one of the last members of the House Flambeau. She persuaded him to meet with the covenant. Eventually, he came into the Auld Covenant to teach his Arts.

Weir was a lackluster teacher, but an excellent student. Perhaps Scot's preternatural age got the best of him, but he seemed to teach Weir without regard for the harmful effects of such knowledge. The Master of Forces devoured the material at an incredible speed.

When Master Scot realized that Weir was holding back from his students to satisfy his growing interest in Spirit, Scot refused further lessons. Weir exploded in anger (literally) and left the Auld Covenant to study on his own. Before Weir disappeared completely, the students brought back reports of his sightings both in the city's pubs and in the outlying Border towns.

Weir returned to Edinburgh five years later in the company of an older woman he called his sister. Wizenened with age, he leaned upon a black staff carved with images of satyrs and serpents. Settling in East Bow, they formed a church called the Saints of East Bow, and began weekly meetings. He refused to meet with Michael Scot, but began to teach again.

Scot did not stop his students from attending; many of them were strangely attracted to the older woman, who was said to have been a dark faerie. Even after Mary Hay became convinced of a new sinister side of Weir, she could not move Scot. In fact, Scot became increasingly hard to find, even though he lived at the chantry. Mary Hay reported that she forgot Scot's existence for weeks at a time. Suddenly, he vanished completely. The adepts of the Auld Covenant reported that even the outer layers of the walls and floors of his room disappeared with him. It was as if he had been erased.

Mary could not entice the other members of the covenant into action. They believed Scot had abandoned them, and contented with Weir as their new teacher. Mary fled Edinburgh for Paris in an attempt to find the members of Scot's old Order, Ex Miscellanea. On the dark streets of Paris, she found another mage, Phillipe Clemenceau.

Clemenceau listened to her story intently, then revealed that he was an Euthanatos. Some of the Good Deaths he had awarded in Paris made the city a difficult place for him to work, so he agreed to help as long as he was allowed into their covenant. Mary Hay agreed. They snuck across the channel to Edinburgh, but found that in the months that Mary had been gone, the Auld Covenant's house had been abandoned. The other students had moved into Weir's new "chapel."

Hay and Clemenceau's magicks were too weak to take on Weir directly, so they set about exposing his practices to the Kirk. At Weir's chapel, windows and doors suddenly flew open during rituals. When the Saints of East Bow performed ceremonies in the isolated countryside, picnickers would show up out of the blue.

Spirits seemed to move Weir's black cane around the neighborhood. Eventually, the populace had enough. Weir, his sister and three of his "congregation" were tied to the stake, strangled and burned.

Mary Hay and Clemenceau rebuilt the Auld Covenant and gave it a second purpose, to root out the Awakened who had strayed. Michael Scot's disappearance was never explained, but his arcane nature seemed to imbue the sturdy frame house that he lived in. His room is still maintained, as empty as the day he disappeared, in hopes that he will return.

Of course if Evelyn Davies' treatise is correct, he has never left.

End of Lesson 1123,

Margot Stair

The Hallows

Hallows — (from Celtic mythology) The regalia or emblems of empowerment wielded by a king or hero, often the object of a quest. The 13 Curiosities of Britain and the Grail are examples of a culture's hallows.

The Hallows is a secret society within House Eiluned. Its purpose is to track down fae (sidhe) artifacts (talismans and chimera) from the times before the Shattering. The members concentrate on the conventional European or Celtic culture of the fae. Most use what they can learn from the fragmentary knowledge of other fae, but their richest resources come from human folk tales, myths and legend. Most members are experts in this lore.

The Hallows contains a mix of both courts and all political philosophies, although Traditionalists abound due to the nature of the Hallows' work. Reformers within the society wish to admit members of other houses. They point to the successes of the once-opposed commoner fae, such as Margaux de Desiree. Modernists, especially the Unseelie factions, wish to pursue new talismans and chimera. The Traditionalists frown on all of these ideas. They see the established methods of subversion, seduction, eavesdropping and the use of their cantrips to be methods more apt for gathering information.

The Hallows has an informal structure; the members of House Eiluned *know* that they will keep some secrets from each other. However, members cannot afford to keep too many secrets for they often need help investigating leads or recovering items. Although not adverse to doing a little treasure finding, most members of The Hallows prefer to manipulate others into risking life and limb for the artifacts they search for. Members aid each other by supplying information useful for coercing, bribing and blackmailing their stooges...or agents.

The Hallows holds gatherings called tuam (Gaelic for vault) during major festivals that its members already attend. On the Isle of the Mighty, the International Eisteddfod, the Trooping of the Colour (the queen's birthday) and the Edinburgh International Arts Festival provide a venues members of The Hallows to meet, plot and admit new members.

It is at these meetings that the society also appoints its leadership, the Archivists. The three Archivists hold their positions for life. Archivists decide the fate of the artifacts that the society recovers. They also deal with problems that may arise. The Archivists have little compunction for hiring members of the Monkey's Paw if their society or an artifact is in danger. (See **Nobles: The Shining Host.**)

The Tuath of Shadows: the Isle of Skye and the Hebrides

Bethag's the countess of the Tuath of Shadows. During The '69 she personally pulled Ross' bannock out of the when a Glaswegian nocker sicced a steam bull on him. The chimerical bull had backed Ross into one of the defunct iron refineries of Govan when Bethag showed up and gelded it.

— Anguish MacSporran, *Redcap's Diary*

The warm waters of the Little Minch separate the Inner and Outer Hebrides. The Inner Hebrides include Skye, Mull, Islay and Jura. The Outer Hebrides, or Western Isles, include Lewis and Harris, North and South Uist, Benbecula, Barra, Saint Kilda and the Flannan Islands. Although most of the 500 or more islands are rocky and wet, others, like Skye and Lewis, are so large that their topography cannot be pigeonholed. Skye contains hill, moor, mountain and hundreds of miles of rocky coastline.

The Tuath of Shadows is ruled not by a noble, but by a Ross' warlord, Bethag of House Scathach. Her tale begins with the Pennons Massacre and the Battle of Thirteen Duels.

Ross, who only ruled the Kingdom of Iron, cast his eyes on the Hebrides and the Western Isles. For years the Isles had been home to commoner clans. He wanted to change that.

Ross sent Leyden and tried a new tactic of conquest. Count Leyden tried to make pacts with the commoner lairds, hoping to eventually convert them into his vassals, and then replace them with sidhe nobles. Ross never understood the clans. The clans had their own squabbles, but things were relatively peaceful at the time. With all of the resulting alliances, the scales were balanced. Ross' stupidity knocked everything out of kilter and threw open the doors to the hounds of slaughter.

One of the clans from Lewis, Clann Eye, accepted Ross' help and managed to evict most of its rivals from the islands in general. As a good-will gesture, Ross sent 10 of his personal guards to mark the Pennons Festival in the hall of the laird of Clann Eye. The guards were to joust, showing the poor commoners how pretty and dangerous they were. Funny, a knight still can't outrun a bomb. Everyone in the hall was killed in the blast.

When he heard the news, Ross lost his head and said he would knight and give title to any sidhe who could subdue the Isles. For months the ambushes and battles raged from Mull to Lewis. Suddenly, the sidhe nobles who were trying to subdue all those fearsome childings and grumps were called out, one-by-one, by an unknown sidhe warrior (in single combat, no matter the weapons). The gray-haired woman defeated them all and sent them home in shame without their swords. The commoners went wild and the clans threw in behind her, but she refused to lead an army. Instead, the wandering knight delivered the arms of all the warriors she had defeated to Ross. Bethag had come back to collect her boon.

Bethag, standing amid the swords of 13 sidhe warriors, asked to be put in charge of the Isles. Much to the noble's surprise, Ross granted her request without hesitation. After all, she subdued the Isles. He made her Countess of the Tuath of Shadows, Warlord of the Isles.

Bethag is a member of House Scathach. The fact that she took a position as one of Ross' vassals makes her one of the most unpopular members of a shunned house.

Uninnseann's Troth

I'm not sure who will read this in the end, so I would like you to know my name is Uninnseann (oo NIN shane), which means ash. My mother calls me a Verbena, my lover calls me an Ecstatic, but they're both wrong. I'm a bard. A few months ago, at the Bardic College on Skye, there was a real big throw-down on our mission. Fae, mage, Sleeper and Garou have been coming together for years on that isle in honor of the MacCrimmons, the pipers of legend, to put aside our politics. But a bunch of hot-headed — and by that time of night inebriated — musicians can only talk about music and the weather for so long.

I wandered out into the rain to cool off and soon found myself with Alasdair, bard to Queen Glynnis of Three Hills, and Tam, a Garou over from Northern Ireland. Tam wasn't a brute. He had a lanky frame and dark hair that was plastered to his head as he shuffled behind Alasdair. I had taken a shot of Glenfhada, that magic whisky I have when I'm around fae. It allows me to see them as they truly are. Alasdair seemed unscathed by the rain, but his usually lively face was grave.

"Uninnseann, I beg your help!" he said. He drew us down with him into the puddles outside the cottage. "The Bardic College must have protection, and we must provide it for them. I have spoken with Tam, but I need your help too!"

It was there, consecrated by rain, one of the sacred waters of life, that we pledged to compile a bardic Domesday Book, an account of what we know of the supernatural. With this knowledge, we can bargain with any force that opposes us. Perhaps, the more progressive members can even use the book to work for change, unite the fae, repair the relations of the Traditions....

The Bardic College

Poetry goes through walls of brick

or stone or mud or any

solid, visible substance.

What's heard in that?

A slender plant can do it

Walls of silence — they are the test —

or walls we face on parting

— Tessa Ransford, "Poetry Goes Through Walls"

The Bardic College is a secret association of master human, fae, mage and Garou artists. It began as a group of musician friends of Alasdair, now chief bard to Queen Glynnis of Three Hills. As the artists learned from each other and from the heritage of the bard, they decided to meet more frequently and formally. They



chose Skye to honor the McCrimmon pipers of old and because they thought Bethag to be a likely ally, if needed.

There is no set path for a bard. They do not fit into one mold. Human members are pipers, singers and fiddle players from all walks of life. They all share some tie to the Caledonii, the fae word for magical beings: Garou, mages and fae. All are Acolytes, Kinfolk or Kinain. Sometimes unruly but fun bards “borrow” (kidnap) and enchant human master musicians for wild jam sessions. (No, the bards are not hiding Jim Morrison, Janis Joplin, Jimi Hendrix or Elvis!)

The Caledonii follow many bardic conventions. Possibly the oldest is of the fae minstrel. Seelie musicians play to instruct and entertain, but there is an equally strong tradition of the Unseelie’s use of musical powers to entrap and misguide.

Many of the Verbenic bards follow the lessons of the Celtic harpists. They divide their interests between philosophy, folklore and music. Their main purposes are to question and to teach.

The Ecstasies revel in Celtic culture and lore. The Cult of Ecstasy produces some of the best pipers in Scotland. This has led to an unusual branch of Ecstasies who crave the experience of *mir-cath* (the joyous frenzy of battle) or *crith-gaisge* (quiverings of valor) by performing their music and magick. Their purpose is to inflame or create passion on the battlefield or in the sports arena.

The members elect a Nàdurachd (NAD-urr-uch), Gaelic for natural instinct, to preside over their meetings. This officer also oversees the applications of journeymen who are to become masters of the college. These artists must compose and perform masterpieces to be accepted. If even one of the current masters disapproves of a piece, it must be discarded, not mended. Fortunately, there is no limit to the number of applications. Journeymen enter the college when a master submits their names for membership. Some of the masters are quite paranoid. As Garou, mage and fae masters attempt to ferret out spies in the college, the poor journeyman’s life and deeds are soon known to all.

Originally, the group kept its political views quiet, but as members have grown to know each other’s music, so have they also learned to understand each other’s backgrounds and views. Fae bards have expressed their worries as they learn about the Technocracy and the Wyrms. Mages have grown excited about what they call the “fae paradigm” and their hopes for a new world. Garou have hungered for the wyld of the fae and the chance to fight the Wyrms and Weaver-ridden Technocracy. The few humans of the college have marveled at the larger world revealed to them. But as members’ knowledge has grown, the dynamism of the Bardic College has naturally brought the group to the precipice. Will the bards remain individual masters of lore?

Alasdair, an Ecstatic fiddler, a Fianna and a sidhe have set out to produce a new Domesday Book for Caledonia. It is a listing of mystical places, fae holdings, Garou septs, Tradition cabals and whatever other information that can be found concerning the Technocracy.

Braolauch shi (The Fairy Flag)

Many different stories exist about the Fairy Flag. Some say it was given to a MacLeod when his fae wife had to depart (to Arcadia?). Other legends say it was given to the MacLeods by the queen of the fae. Whatever the source, the legends of its powers are more constant. The flag summons aid from the otherworld, conferring victory to the MacLeods. The MacLeods were only granted three uses of its power. After the third and final use, the standard and its bearer are to be borne back to the land of the fae. Common legend holds that the flag has been used twice: during the battle of Glendale in 1490, and at the Battle of Trumpan in 1580. Both times the MacLeods were victorious. The nature of the aid is not set. Once it is said to have doubled the number of warriors on the MacLeods’ side. Other accounts state that the MacLeods’ skill and fierceness were doubled. The Flag’s mystique has lasted into modern times. During World War II, MacLeod pilots carried pictures of it into battle to protect them.

Dunvegan Castle, Skye

Hold fast!

— MacLeod clan motto.

Dunvegan castle was once only entered via the sea, but the present structure, extensively rebuilt in the 1800s, now has a bridge from the mainland. A well-groomed garden stretches behind the rectangular-shaded castle and its mock pepperpot turrets. Although the MacLeod chieftain still dwells there, the castle is now also the temporary home to the many tourists who visit.

Fae blood still runs strong in the MacLeods. This may have influenced the MacLeod lairds who never participated in the Highland Clearances.

Fir Chreig (The False Men), The Callanish Standing Stones

I have walked the path of the Shining One and felt its power.

— Turning Leaf, Dreamspeaker Adept

This site is one of the most interesting in all Britain. It is relatively unknown, and therefore one of the most remote and best-preserved mystic sites. The locals still visit on May Day and Midsummer’s Day, despite the Kirk’s protestations.

The ruins consists of 27 stones that form a rough cross. The center of the cross is a circle of 13 stones with a center stone. Other stone circles and two caerns are nearby.

On Midsummer’s Day it is said the “Shining One” will stride the avenue of stone. Other traditions speak of a priest-king from a foreign land, all clad in feathers, whose dark-skinned servants

came and raised the stones for some arcane purpose. Still others tell of the giants who came to this spot when too many of the people turned from the old ways. They turned themselves to stone until the old faith returned.

Kingdom of Alba

Scotland's worst disease is its appalling love for and dependence on the calculable.

— Hugh MacDiarmid, *Scotia Irredenta*

Alba includes the regions known as Aberdeenshire, Central, Tayside, Fife and Grampian, basically the lowland areas extending from the Tay and wrapping around the eastern slopes of the Highlands. The largest cities in the area are Inverness, Perth, Dundee and Aberdeen, where King Niall resides.

Most of the sidhe of Caledonia regard King Niall of Alba as the only ruler who could seriously challenge Ross for high king. He's tough and he has hundreds of nockers working for him — making his army the best equipped in Caledonia, if not on the Isle of the Mighty. Although Alba has few sidhe compared to the other two kingdoms, it has powerful resources. The commoners will fight for him. Many seasoned warriors who fled the kingdoms forming around Glasgow and Edinburgh found refuge with Niall. The nockers of the Contrivancy created a boar spear for Niall, called Schiltron, which equips his allies with a potent copy of itself. And, Niall has formed strong friendships with Asa, the most powerful troll jarl of the Isles. Her forces turned the tide in several of Niall's early battles with Ross and old King Baird of the now-defunct Kingdom of Dew.

Niall's realm is not without problems. Niall has lost his voicebox to cancer. His nocker engineers invented the Collar of Command for him. This treasure fits over his throat and lower jaw, giving him the power of speech.

The northern reaches of his realm also suffer under the depredations of the Stoorworm, a chimerical dragon of fantastic size and hunger. But the most insidious danger comes from the Contrivancy itself. Many times the clockwork chimera produced there go mad and have to be hunted down. Niall's love of machines has infected the day-to-day operations of his kingdom. Late courtiers are not admitted to court. Kithain can only use the trods with permits duly stamped and sealed by countless bureaucrats, and the pathways operate on a strict schedule.

The Sterling Institute for Folklore Quantification

I see what you mean Dr. Erskine. What a fool I have been. Thank you for explaining the true meaning of all those childish tales. I won't waste the time of my kindergartners with them any more. Being good counters and bureaucrats would be much better for them.

— Angie Fitzhue, ex-sidhe

Sterling Castle is a luxurious marble-clad manor located in the medieval town of Sterling. It houses several departments of the University of Sterling, chiefly, The Stirling Institute for

Folklore Quantification. This group of fanatical ethnographers, which works under the leadership of Scotland's infamous Dauntain, Dr. Calum Erskine, cuts a swath though the Dreaming big enough to drive a really huge, boring truck through.

Dr. Erskine's groundbreaking dissertation, "Quantifiable Dreams: Economic Determinants in Ubiquitous Folk Ideologies," created a whole new discipline for the scholars at Sterling. Dr. Erskine, along with his graduate students and associate professors, scours the Highlands and Lowlands in search of data. Due to generous contributions from industrialists and oil companies, Erskine is often able to bring these living archives of quaint folk wisdom to his laboratories where all of beliefs can be charted, probed and analyzed. Dr. Erskine is also fond of holding instructional sessions in rural schools to describe how folk traditions and lore are inconsequential as art or the foundations of belief and wonder. Rather, he claims that they have invaluable worth as predictors of sociological and economic trends.

One of Calum's ex-graduate students, Edward Buchanan, is his most vocal detractor. Buchanan argues for the folk tales to be taken for what they are: lessons in life. His presence at the meetings sends Dr. Erskine into a rage. On several occasions Erskine has attempted to assault his old student, especially when confronted with his own lively undergraduate work, which Edward uses as evidence against Calum's cold economic dogma.

Erskine's other ardent foe and the chief target of midnight rants to his graduate students is his brother, Russell Erskine, known in his fae mien as King Ross of Dalriada.

Tuath Glas Cu: The Barren Pool of Scotland

A few years ago Dr. Erskine stepped on a loose marble slab on the floor of his office while working late one night. It concealed a cramped, stone-lined passage. Grabbing a torch, the doctor walked the serpentine tunnel. It opened into a huge, low-vaulted chamber. The room was round and its limestone flagstones were inscribed with a smaller circle, which outlined a pool. The Cavern looked like a Roman bath, except its sides were not inlaid with stone, but were formed by packed earth. At the nadir of the pool was a deep fissure.

Curious, Dr. Erskine stepped into the pool and walked to its center. For some reason he was moved to tears. He cried for a time, his hands clutching the sides of the crevasse, until he felt water lapping at his fingertips, welling up from depths. Startled, he leapt to his feet and there, beside him, was Edward Buchanan one of his students. Edward was changed, covered in green leaves. Calum felt humiliated and betrayed to be found crying by one of his students. It didn't matter that Edward was crying as well. Dr. Erskine beat him unconscious and left him there. The great well of Caledonia has gone dry.



The Tuath of Chronos

It's not me fault I'm wet! I heard bells, then saw a wee hill by the river where one had not been before. That I swear. I tried to run up its smooth sides, but a root caught me feet and I fell. I heard laughter then found myself floatin' in the Tay! Honest!

— Davie MacCrum, sidhe childing

The Tuath of Chronos is a mysterious place believed to be in a fae mound somewhere on the banks of the Tay. Many fae believe that a powerful Seer of Chronos and his fae wife managed to hide a pre-Shattering site from the ravages of time and Banality. If a changeling spots a hillock surmounted by a huge tree with many branches, each sporting new leaf-buds, while wandering the banks of the Tay, she may encounter the Tuath of Chronos. A silver horn dangles from one of the branches and cradled by the tree's massive roots is a well made of white stone. The mages and fae living in this tuath guard its secrets jealously.

Culcross Abbey, Fife

I have heard the music, I can smell the gold....

— Galt, sidhe of House Elunied, member of The Hallows

It is said that a man seated in a golden chair dwells in a maze of tunnels beneath the abbey. If found, he will offer great treasures. A blind piper and his dog are supposed to have entered the tunnels, and it is said they found the man in the golden chair. A few days after they entered, only the dog returned. Even now the sounds of the man's pipes can be heard up to a mile from Culcross Abbey.

Glamis Castle, Tayside

*Avaunt and quit my sight! Let the earth hide thee!
Thy bones are marrowless, thy blood is cold
...Hence horrible shadow!
Unreal mock'ry, hence!*

— Macbeth, speaking to Banquo's ghost, *Macbeth*

Glamis is a large mansion with fanciful towers and battlements atop its walls.

Besides being the setting of the murder of King Duncan in *Macbeth*, Glamis houses other mysteries. It is said that there is one more window in Glamis than can be accounted for. Popular legend holds several reasons for this imperfection. One legend has it that Earl Beardie, a laird of Glamis, was losing badly at cards. When asked to desist, he exclaimed that he wanted to play cards until doomsday. A demon responded by causing the room to disappear, but only from the inside of Glamis. Sometimes the window re-appears, revealing the earl and his demonic poker mates.

The most famous legend is that the room holds one of the true heirs of Glamis; born misshapen, it was walled up in a secret room. As each of the heirs of Glamis comes of age, she is shown the undying monstrosity and told of its true identity.

NORRIE'S LAW and LARGO LAW, Balmain and Largo, Fife

Largo Law is a grass-covered knoll named after Largo village. Norrie's Law is located nearby at the village of Balmain. Norrie's Law was a part of Largo Law, supposedly moved there by Michael

Scot's hobgoblins: Prig, Prim, and Pricker. They were given the task of excavating Largo Law. The three buffoonish demons built a giant shovel and had thrown one spadeful off Largo Law when Scot suddenly gave them another task. Norrie's law was formed as a result. Largo Law is said to contain a mine filled with enchanted gold, guarded by a warrior in silver armor. Many shepherds believe that sheep left to graze and sleep on Largo Law will turn yellow thanks to the magic of the gold. The warrior is said to have appeared to a shepherd saying:

If Auchindownie cock disna craw

An Balmain horn disna blaw,

Ill tell ye where to gowd mine is in Largo Law.

An alternate history of Norrie's Law states that a stranger, hearing this tale from the shepherd, killed all the cocks in the village of Auchindownie and paid off the herdsman of Balmain not to blow their horns to summon their cattle. He stood on Largo Law and, at sunset, the silver warrior appeared. At that instant, a herdsman, Tammie Norrie, who wanted the gold for himself, blew his horn. The warrior grew angry, drew his sword and said:

Woe to the man that blew the horn,

For out of the spot he shall ne'er be borne!

With that Tammie Norrie was struck dead, and the silver warrior vanished. True to his word, Tammie Norrie's body could not be moved from the spot. In desperation, the townsfolk covered him with earth, creating Norrie's Law.

Scone Palace and the Fatale Marmor, The Stone of Destiny, Scone

For Caledonia? You fool, I don't want it out of love for the land, love of Rob Roy or any other deluded git. That stone is from Arcadia itself! It is power; it may even be a way back.

—Lord Aegil, The Hallows

This fantastic Gothic palace is the third castle to stand at this site. As the last resting place of the Stone of Scone, the coronation stone for Scottish rulers, it is one of the most beloved sites of Scottish nationalists. It is believed that the stone was carried over from Ireland by the Scotti, or possibly by a fae princess. Thirty-four Scottish kings were enthroned upon it, and with the stone went the rulership of Scotland. It was stolen from Scone by Edward I and placed in Westminster Palace, beneath the British coronation chair, where it has been used in the coronation rituals of British monarchs.

Aberdeen

One detests Aberdeen with the scorn of a thwarted lover. It is the one hauntingly and exasperatingly lovable city in Scotland.

—Lewis Grassic Gibbon

The third-largest city in Scotland, Aberdeen now controls a sizable portion of the country's wealth due to oil interests. Aberdeen, as the quote suggests, is either loved or hated by its visitors. Most of the city is made from granite and this, mixed with the near-constant rain, gives the city a dreary feel. Yet when the sun breaks through, the wet stone bursts forth with color. The citizenry has attempted to make up for the city's relative drabness by cultivating some of Britain's most wonderful gardens.

Nockers make up an large percentage of the fae of this area, and the sidhe are dominated by House Dougal.

Mystery Date

I once had the unfortunate honor to test out one of the Contrivancy's new weapons. Once. Now, the nocker who vomited this hellspawn device out of his pointy noggin made two mistakes. The first was not to tell me I had to show up sober, and the second was to get a sidhe for the other test dummy. I figured I was gonna get shot with somethin' or be having to eat me way out of some supposedly indestructible cave or such. I never figured upon the Virtual Myrmidon.

The collection of industrial tools collected at the Contrivancy only improved my mood as Dr. Pinhead, the nocker, strapped me into a full-body harness with all kinds of levers, pulleys, wheels and such poking out every which way. Then he shows me this metal knight.

"You have been hooked up to a machine, much too complicated for you to understand, that transmits your every movement to the Virtual Myrmidon in front of you. You're mission is simple. I want you to spar with Balfor..."

"Lord Balfor!" said the sidhe who stepped out from behind one of the welding curtains.

He sported one of those open-chested poufter shirts. The clown wasn't even wearing armor!

"After I dice captain pansy, do I get paid?" I asked.

The sidhe snorted as Dr. Pinhead continued, "This is a sparring match, Mr. Anguish, I merely want you to dodge Lord Balfor's blows. When he hits you, the Virtual Myrmidon will transmit that information to you via mild electric shocks."

As he completed his prattling, he threw a switch on something called a "dynamo," and I noticed the other nockers began clearing the room.

The first "mild electric shock" rang me bollocks like castanets and singed my short hairs. This wouldnae bothered me so much, but it sobered me up.

The myrmidon had one thing going for it. I grabbed the sidhe with it as Dr. Pinhead turned off the dynamo switch, freezing the sidhe in the myrmidon's arms. Dr. Pinhead didn't have the sense to run after I ate me way out of the machine, so I grabbed him and strapped his squirming body into the harness. I flicked on the dynamo and picked up a lead pipe and headed over to the screaming sidhe and the mechanical soldier.

"Well, Dr. Pinhead and Sir About-to-be-bruised-a-lot, I want to do a little experiment of my own. It's called The Virtual Electrolysis and Sidhe Bludgeoning Machine."

The Contrivancy

Niall's brain trust is located down near the docks in an old herring factory. The Contrivancy is filled with boilers, tongs, hammers, industrial lathes and anvils, all of which make a fine row, pleasing to the hordes of nockers working there. The sidhe knights of House Dougal act as guards, wardens and crisis intervention specialists. The guards' main responsibility is to make sure that no foreign power attempts to steal the Contrivancy's secrets or to



kidnap its nockers. The knights also have to be called out when one of the experiments goes awry. Their most dreaded task lands them in the middle of various union squabbles, as the arbiters of the endless claims of "That bugger stole my chimerical hydra-spanner!"

Kingdom of Three Hills: Borders

Alasdair's invitation took me to Queen Glynis of the Kingdom of Three Hills. To my "normal," even if magickal eyes, the queen and her entourage seemed like a group of lost fox hunters. One dram of Glenfhada, fae whisky from the Highlands, and their staggering beauty was revealed. The red hunting coats of the knights transformed into purple and scarlet armor. The ladies' and advisors' caps bloomed into heather and thistle crowns. Their clothes were right out of Brian Froud's wet dreams: silver mesh capes, silk trains which seemed to turn to blades of grass or fronds of rhododendron. The cloth melded with the ground, rather than rested upon it. The foxhounds stayed the same, although their coats were more shiny, but in their midst were huge midnight-black mastiffs with golden collars made of clasping beetles. Glynis was terribly beautiful. Her horse transformed from a graceful hunter to an ivory Clydesdale with black hair about its silver hooves. When she rode, Glynis dressed in emerald green and purple with red highlights, a huge black-sequined cape shaped like beetle wings flared out behind her.

Niall and Ross see Glynis as the weakest of the fae rulers of Caledonia, and compared to Ross' sidhe army and Niall's clockwork chimera, Glynis' few knights paled in insignificance. Lord Alasdair, my host at this meeting, said that Glynis' Kingdom, while covering more area than the others, does not have any major cities within its borders. Nor does she have a rath, a fortress of her own. Instead, she heads a Progress Court. She travels from freehold to freehold, in no set order. Some of the fae minstrels told me that the nobles of the North call her the Queen of Villages, or the Queen of Tentpegs.

We met in the Lowther Hills, south of a village called Elwanfoot. Baron Nigel, a boggan, set up a tent in some woods gathered between hills. He, his wife and three boys, one of whom was a sidhe, were scurrying to and fro, bellies bouncing, to see to the needs of the entourage. For the most part, poor Nigel and company were ignored, but at sunset the queen called Nigel and his sidhe son forth, rewarding Nigel for his service with a torch lit from her balefire and an offer to take Nigel's son as a squire to her household.

I was then called forth to regale the crowds with my music. They eyed me with suspicion at first, but man, playing for the fae is the best. Somewhere during my second set they opened up the wine and let the commoners from the surrounding villages in to party. By the time I was finished, the crowd — boggan, satyr, nocker and sidhe — were twirling each other around like the best of buddies. Queen Glynis even took a spin with old Nigel!

Glynis and her kingdom are underestimated. Her court of progress allows her to keep up with what is going on in her kingdom and makes her hard to find. Her power is not concentrated, but covers the breadth of her lands. Any fae invasion would be faced with an endless series of

battles, and based on their faces at court, the commoners would fight side-by-side with *sidhe* knights.

As you know from what you read, Glynis also has spies in other kingdoms, but it was what I saw last night, after the camp had gone to bed, that convinces me that she is a force to be reckoned with. I let my perceptions flow out of my body and journeyed around the camp, even to the green tent of Glynis. I flew past her guards and through the flap into Glynis' private chamber. There sat a huge black brazier and her balefire, licking menacingly at the fabric of the tent roof. Next to it crouched Glynis, sandwiched between the jaws of an ebony steamer trunk. She chanted over a clay figurine she was fashioning. I could not tell whom the figure looked like, but inside the trunk were several figures I recognized, each carefully set into velvet molds. One had the flaming red mane of Ross. Another had clockwork pieces stuck into its surface: Niall. They were *corp creadha*, Scottish voodoo dolls....

— Uninnseann, *Domesday Book*

The Kingdom of Three Hills includes the regions known as Dumfries and Galloway, part of Strathclyde and Borders, and even part of England — the northern section of Northumbria. The fae still respect the old border, Hadrian's Wall.

This country has no major towns, but is rich with history and Glamour. This land birthed Sir Robert Scott and Robert Burns. This is the land of deep lochs, misty moors and flat-topped hills.

The area encompassed by The Kingdom of Three Hills is brimming with mysterious places: ruined abbeys, crumbling castles, ancient brochs, and the prehistoric hill-forts which dot Britain. These forts now appear as circular mounds with concentric rings of grass-covered ramparts.

Dryburgh Abbey

It wasn't magic that drew me to Dryburgh Abbey, but pirates. I was 10 when Kidnapped and Treasure Island transformed my mother's cottage into the finest brig on the seas. I was "Uninnseann, pirate wench of the Seven Seas." I had come to see the grave of Sir Walter Scott. And I ran into my first Chorister.

— Uninnseann, *Domesday Book*

The abbey is now a framework of arches and collapsed walls, most notable as the home of the grave of Sir Walter Scott. It is also home to a cabal of Choristers. This cabal's mission is to repair the damage done to the relations of the Traditions within Scotland. Its ranks may seem stereotypical; three of its four members are invested nuns, but under Sister Isobel's wise leadership the Choristers are not allowed to proselytize. Acceptance, and beneficence are the mottos of the chantry.

The only problem with Sister Isobel's plan is that she and her two compatriots are, well, boring. Their idea of carousing is a tea party on the lawn — without china! Their saving grace of the social scene is Faruq ibn Kamal. He runs the gift shop with the flair of a Jordanian merchant at a bazaar. His flamboyant nature and Islamic ideology sometimes scare Sister Charity and Sister Felicity, but as long as their hearts can stand the strain, Sister Isobel hopes that he can help them make overtures to the mages in Scotland.

Closeburn Castle and the Swan-Song Curse, Dumfries and Galloway

The pooka of Closeburn are a wild and vengeful lot.

— Uninnseann, *Domesday Book*

Closeburn Castle lies in the middle of a loch northeast of the town of Dumfries and is known for receiving blessing that became a curse. In ancient times whenever one of the Kirkpatrick family grew ill, a pair of swans alight on the castles' beautiful loch. As they swam around the loch, the sick family member grew strong again.

Robert Kirkpatrick, the heir of the Kirkpatricks, grew curious about the tale of the swan song, the mournful cry of the swan during its death. He shot, killed and buried one of the swans, but heard no cry. The next year the other swan did not return, so he thought no more of it. But the following year a swan appeared with a red stain on its breast, and as it swam around the loch the head of the family soon sickened and died. Thereafter, the swan's return is regarded as a harbinger of sickness and death.

Culzean Castle and Fairy Guide, Maybole, Strathclyde

The faeries repay their debts and never forget their enemies.

— Old Scottish Saying

The castle is set on top of a rock 80 feet above the sea. Its original military face was redone into a much more livable structure many years ago. The cliffs beneath the castle contain three caves which are said to be inhabited by the fae.

One day when the laird of the castle was walking outside during a storm, a small child appeared with a wooden cup and asked for ale for his sick mother. The laird agreed and gave the cup to his steward who went to the first tun of ale beneath the castle, and found it had nearly gone dry. Figuring it good enough for the waif, he returned. The laird was outraged when he saw the half-filled cup and demanded that the steward drain every cask in the keep if necessary to fill the boy's cup. The chastened servant came back a little later with a full cup and gave it to the boy. There was a flash of lightning, and the boy disappeared.

Many years later, the laird was in the wars in Flanders. During a storm, his unit was broken and cut down to a man. As he waited to die, the laird heard a voice calling to him. It was the boy with the cup. Taking the laird's hand, he led the man round a bend and the laird unbelievably found himself outside the walls of his castle back in Scotland! The Boy was gone.

Edin's Hall Broch: The Castle of the Red Etin, Duns, Borders

Common enemies make nasty neighbors into fast friends. The fomori bind the humans and fae together.

— Alasdair, Bard of Shadows

This broch sits upon a hill of pastureland; partway down the slope begins a band of trees, pierced by a quick-flowing burn. But

what makes this broch remarkable is that this is the site described in one the oldest Scottish fairy tales from Scotland, *The Red Etin*.

In the story, a three-headed, red giant (*eoten* is Old English for giant) lived in a hill-fort where he imprisoned the daughter of the king of Scotland. A young man set off to find her and make his fortune, but being rude and not very bright, failed. The Red Etin (a Formorian?) captured him and, using his magical mallet, turned the boy, like the princess, into a pillar of rock. The young man's brother decided to rescue his older sibling, but all his mother could give him is a small piece of cake. Just after he set out, an old woman met him on the road and asked for some of the cake. He gave all he had to her, and she gave him a magic wand and the answers to the three riddles of the Red Etin. She turned into a raven and flew away. His generosity rewarded, the boy then had to prove his bravery by not showing fear as he encountered strange beasts with two heads and four horns which encircled the Red Etin's castle. After striding through the beasts, he met the giant and answered his riddles, and took away all of the monster's powers. The lad picked up an ax and chopped off each head. The raven flit in a window and turned back into the old woman, and she showed him how to use the wand to free his brother and the princess from the stone pillars in which they were entombed.

Eildon Hills, Melrose, Borders

It's all a lie.

— True Thomas

The Eildon Hills are actually one hill with three peaks. Several legends have grown up around it. The northernmost peak commands the view of the valleys below and is the site of the largest broch in Scotland. The Romans built a fort nearby called Trimontium (Three Hills) during their efforts to control Scotland.

The three peaks themselves are the subject of one tale. It is said that the hill only had one peak until Michael Scot (see "Kingdom of Dew") gave one of the devils he dominated the task of splitting it into three.

The most famous legend concerns how Thomas the Rhym-er (Thomas of Erceldoune, True Thomas) met a faerie queen. Thomas, a minor bard at the time, was riding down the grassy side of the hills when he spied a lady of indescribable beauty standing beside a tree. He pledged his love for her and begged her to lie with him under the tree. She said it would ruin her beauty, but heartily consented. She did grow ugly, but also revealed that she was one of the queens of the fae, and asked him to go with her under hill, into the realm of fairy. The journey took three terrifying days, but Thomas never lost faith in his lady and was rewarded by being allowed to stay with her for three days in the realm of wonder. There he learned to prophesize the future, but was also "blessed" with a tongue that could not lie. When he returned after three days, he found that three years had passed. The tree under which he awoke, the same one under which he bedded the fae, was called the Eildon Tree. The site is now marked by the Eildon Stone.

Hermitage Castle, The Nine Stane Ring: Lord Soulis, Castledon, Borders

Truth should not be spoken at all times.

— Sir Walter Scott, Diaries

Hermitage Castle is a fortified mansion-house with walls that loom over the fields of Castledon. Former lairds used Hermitage's dungeons for numerous murders before Lord Soulis became warden of the Scottish Marches during the reign of Robert the Bruce. Soulis was a huge and brutish man with a knack for diabolic magic and cruelty. His royal blood gave him protection from his crimes against the local populace and nobles. The fae blood which also ran through his veins bought him a redcap protector who used his Arts to enchant Soulis so that the man could not be killed by forged steel or hempen rope. Soulis' acts of infamy grew so great that one day the king off-handedly said, "Boil him if you please, but let me hear no more of him!" Several knights took the king at his word and seized Soulis and bore him to the Nine Stane Ring, an ancient stone circle near Hermitage castle. There, the knights suspended a huge pot from an iron bar braced on two of the standing stones. Placing Soulis inside, they chained the pot shut and lit a fire. Not daring to look into the pot, when they were done, they buried it on the spot. It is said that the redcap remains in the area, waiting the further commandments from his master.

Spedlin's Tower, Lochmaßen, Dumfries and Galloway

I've got a story that will make you not feel so bad next time you just loose your keys to your car.

— Alasdair, Bard of Shadows

Spedlin's Tower is a ruined tower that sits atop a sparsely wooded hill on the western bank of the river Annan. One of the lords of the tower locked a man named Porteus in his dungeon, in a pit closed with a tight iron door. The lord was suddenly called to Edinburgh in the middle of the night. A few days after he arrived in Edinburgh, the lord remembered that he kept the key to the door. He sent the key back by a fast rider, but it was too late, Porteus was dead. The people who had heard the man's death-throes opened the pit to find that he had gnawed off his left hand before dying. Porteus' ghost wandered the halls of the tower screaming, "Let me out, let me out; I'm deean' of hunger!" until a priest (a Chorister?) was summoned to banish the spirit. The priest left his Bible with the family, and members found that whenever they took the Bible out of the house, the spirit returned. Before abandoning the house they enclosed the Bible in a strong iron box and locked it away behind the door which sealed the fate of Porteus.

Wormiston, Linton Hill, Borders

The worm was innocent!

— True Thomas

The banks of Linton Hill, or Wormiston, are marked with deep furrows and ridges said to be left by the coils of a great serpent. The serpent attacked passers-by and farm animals for years until the lord of Larriston, John Somerville, killed it by ramming a burning lance down its throat.

The Cridhe: The Untamed Lands

The mountains are extatic, and ought to be visited in pilgrimage once a year. None but those monstrous creatures of God know how to join so much beauty with so much horror.

— Thomas Gray, letter to William Mason

Cridhe is the Gaelic word for heart. The Highlands, Trosachs and Isles are the heart of Caledonia to many of the fae. This is the “heart” from which many commoners who chafe under the heel of the sidhe gain strength. To the sidhe, it is but a vestigial organ of the commoner state of old. If the sidhe tore the heart out, or starved it by controlling the trods of Wallace’s Walk, the Highlands, and, eventually, the Isles, would be theirs.

The Highlands

Although known for their treeless peaks and heather-clad sides, the Highlands are also the last refuge of the great Caledonian forests and numerous species of wildlife including: golden eagles, pine martins, grouse, ptarmigan and red deer. The other characteristic of these mountains is water. The infamous Scottish weather lavishes the Highlands with rain, mist and cloud. As a result, the mountains are home to numerous rivers, rushing burns and lochs hidden by folds of ancient stone.

The Highlands hide many mysteries. Ross and Niall’s informants tell tales of dozens of hearty fae clans. Since the beginning of the War of Ivy, the traditional rivalries of the clans have abated. Arguments once settled with steel are now settled with bottles of scotch, or the fist and boot. Neighboring clans hold Highland games to choose war leaders. A war leader, who is never a laird, commands all the lairds’ forces when the clans are summoned to battle.

No one, not even the lairds of the various clans, knows all of the trods in Wallace’s Walk. But when a clan learns of sidhe encroachments into the Highlands, word spreads from laird to laird, until a sizable force gathers. While the war leaders command the forces, the lairds maintain control over their trods and are responsible for conducting other clans through them as the war leaders command. Before sidhe forces can respond, hordes of Highlander fae flood out of the shadows of the crags and annihilate the “flower” of fae chivalry.

The Highland fae’s greatest ally is the Fianna. Perhaps they, as much as the secret trods of Wallace’s Walk, are responsible for

the commoners’ success against the sidhe. The Fianna are divided into two septs, which protect cairns of immense power on either side of the great glen. The Fianna of the northwest Highlands have relations (if somewhat strained) with the Get of Fenris living on the Orkneys and Shetlands. Those of the Grampians have ties with the mages of the Bardic College on the Isle of Skye.

The clefts and glens of the mountains also harbor ancient magick, and its practitioners. Verbena are the most common Tradition mages, but Hermetics are known to take advantage of the sanctuaries that the Highlands offer. A few Ecstatic pipers also wander the roads and ruins in search of Romantic inspiration. But no Tradition controls the Highlands, even though the Highlands legendary stature draws many Awakened.

On the Highland Clearances

During the early Industrial Revolution (mid-1700s), coal mines proliferated the Central Belt, feeding the growing industries of Glasgow, not to mention the industrial plants of England. Manufacturers needed people to work in the mines, and later in the factories which consumed the mines’ produce. The inefficient crofts (farming villages) of the Highlands were one of the human larders that the industrialists raided. They did so with the tacit consent of the Kirk (after all, a lot of the crofters, while Christian, clung to the old Celtic beliefs and Gaelic history). The Highlanders soon found themselves forced out of their homes and crowded into dark cities and even darker mines. The rich industrialists got the cheap labor they needed. Landowners got more land on which to graze their sheep, and shipped their wool to the cities for processing. The churches in the cities filled their pews and performed services in English. And the crofters exchanged a hard life with a unique culture for an even harder life, usually in the slums of overcrowded, polluted cities. Hence the term the Highland Clearances.

The Clearances marked more than a change in farming techniques. The destruction of numerous crofting villages in the Highlands marked the end of a way of life. Their language (Gaelic) and beliefs, over time, were forgotten to most, foreign to others.

The Awakened were perhaps affected worst of all: The Verbena and the fae were dependent on those people. The Verbena, for all their “tree hugging,” needed *people* to believe in their paradigm. The people were companions, mates and potential new members. Without the crofters to follow the old ways and to simply believe, Verbena magick became less coincidental.

The fae lost their craftsmen, artisans and musicians. They lost dancing companions, lovers and the occasional kidnap victim. The romantic Highlanders were their source of Glamour. It couldn’t be taken from sheep and cattle.

The Clearances were started in part because some of the Choristers wished to rid the Verbena of their support. Perhaps they believed the Verbena were passé, or that the Verbena’s religion was endangering the souls of the crofters who still went to them for advice and participated in rituals.

The Wives of the Wood

Avoid the Dark Wood, and its wives.

— Local saying near Frevater Forest

Villagers living near the Frevater Forest have been telling tales of witches living in the wood. The stories are true. Under the canopy of pine and oak dwells a coven called the Wives of the Wood. It is run by a woman named Elidh, the Wife of the Dark Tree. Not all the villagers fear the witches. Some go to them for aid in times of sickness. The wives guard a dark secret, something they cherish, yet their efforts to save the Frevater are motivated as much by concern for the locals as for their beloved wood.

To Wed the Wood

— Flòraidh MacDounagh, First Wife

I was 14 when we lived in the bountiful Trossachs, where the thick branches of our World Tree shaded the village of Mairead. Many came to us to learn the arts of healing, the seeds of agriculture, the ways of the beast and flower. But the churches and factories grew ever nearer. We thought our brothers and sisters of the Chorus would protect us from the madness and burnings. We were wrong. The agents of Kirk were almost upon us when a strange Hermetic, an old friend of the coven, Michael Scot, stepped from the spirit world and warned us of the approach of flame. Many of our sisters escaped the fires, but the keening death of our World Tree broke them. The torch of one of the priests took my eyes. Our companagh, what some call custos or grogs, saved us. We ran north, into the mountains. Some of the fae brought us food, until weeks later, we came to the Dark Wood, what is now Frevater Forest. There were but three of our order left. Kevin, Pòl and four children were all that remained of our companagh and village.

Kevin, our huntsman, learned that the local villagers feared the wood. So the Goddess had provided a perfect refuge for us. We found that sometimes it pays to listen to the locals. Our huntsmen and the Master, Màiri, went into the wood. Soon after they went in, I felt the fabric of Life being torn, then screams, and nothing more.

Diorbhail, the children and I were all that was left. We slept outside the forest for three days. Then our food ran out. I sent Diorbhail to the nearest village to beg for food, to save the children. I waited until the night birds sang, then I stripped off my clothing and, skyclad, went into the wood. The legends say I was driven by a dream. To tell the truth, I sought death. My eyes were dead, but I stretched out with the Eye of Life and found Him, rooted there, waiting, bathed in the blood of Màiri, Kevin and Pòl. A tree, a man, a demon, his roots reached down into the Wyck of Life. I touched his warm bark, and it softened. I gave myself to it and, for a time, we were whole.

And now, 60 years later, I leave. Scatter my blood on his bark. Nestle me in his rooted hands when I stir no more. Preserve him, use him, love him, give yourself to him, but remember, leave Faith to the Chorus, our betrayers. By this I mean never trust the Dark Tree....



The Loch and Lin and the Brood of the Fachan

The village of Archiemore isn't a metropolis, but it does offer access to the highest cliffs in Scotland, which stand nearly 920 feet tall. The view and winds will steal your breath away. There's a pub on the west side of town on a road that heads towards the hills. The pub is called the Loch and Lin and is run by the chieftain of Clann Wrath. Seumas proves that a boggan can manage intimidation, if he puts his mind to it.

The folks of the clann had invited Clann Skerray and Clann Fionavon to a goodwill meeting at the pub. I played my heart out that night. The place was filled with boggans mostly, but there were a healthy number of satyrs, nockers, and even a few sluagh, eshu and redcaps.

As usual, after one of my performances, I took a walk outside. I jumped a rock wall when I noticed an old redcap, one I had seen from the bar, shuffling behind me. He had a crutch, and I had seen him put it to great effect in bumming drinks at the bar. I turned around when he suddenly leapt at me. He cleared the distance between us in a flash. I saw the silver arc of his crutch, then nothing.

I awoke naked and covered in blood. Well, I thought it was blood until the smell hit me — barbecue sauce! My head refused to clear; all around me were redcaps dancing, singing and fighting. Three or four were preparing a huge metal basket, bard-sized by the look of it. Others were throwing buckets of blood, and urinating on a flat standing stone facing the fire. The stone bore a crudely carved figure with a huge head, one eye, one fang-filled mouth and a single, grasping hand.

I was having a hard time clearing my head. My magick allows me to control the rhythms of my body, but fae magic is slippery. Finally, I just reached out to the Song of Time itself and slowed down the tempo of this party until I could get my wits back. That's when I saw the spears. They floated over my head and buried themselves in the bums of the redcaps pissing on their idol. Two more impaled themselves in the body, and one in the throat, who did a gross Peckinpaw pirouette, blood fanning out of him, and fell into the fire. The redcaps were still slow on the uptake. Before they knew it, Seumas and a bunch of warriors from all the clanns — Wrath, Skerray and Fionavon — were among them. Redcaps don't run out of fear, but the smart ones know when they're licked.

I restored the Beat of Time, and Seumas came over to me.

"Ash," he said, "I booked you for a whole evening. I expected more than one set!"

I was still gagged, but I think he caught both meanings of my words. He reached down and cut off the rags of my jacket which had been used to gag me.

"Kidding aside, you're lucky, lass. Most people don't escape a supper invite from the Brood of the Fachan. Now, we must be off. They or their master, a chimerical nightmare I don't want to face, might come back. Besides we're not at home; they know the Paths of Wallace as well as I. You're almost to Inverness. I know you can be trusted, but nonKithain must wear blindfolds when on the trods.

We walked along the paths; luckily, I grew up naked, or the experience would have bothered me. One of the lads gathered his kilt around me and we trotted a fair piece over the heather.

Then I heard Seumas say, "Ring the stone, Kilbride." I heard a wonderful sound, like the creaking of a door when your mother looks in on you, combined with the ringing of a doorbell when you know it's your lover. I grew warm as we walked forward, but soon it felt as if I was walking on a goose-down pillow. I swear I heard whispers. It was over too soon, and we were walking on a stony path. After a few minutes, the blindfold was removed, and I was standing next to a naked satyr, who was obviously pleased to see me.

"Thanks for the kilt," I said.

"My pleasure. My name's Kilbride," he said with a bow.

I noticed none of the other fae were near. The evening would have been a total waste if Kilbride hadn't offered to clean off the sauce. I love polite fae.

Glenfhada Distillery

There are two things a Highlander likes naked, and one of them is malt whisky.

— Scottish saying

The happiest place in the Highlands is the distillery in the shadow of Ben Fhada, within earshot of the Falls of Glomach. Only the fae know how to reach it; there are no roads, and the forests are warded to make uninvited guests wander. The distillery consists of a small crofter's cottage that's dwarfed by immense hedges of rhododendron and wisteria. Behind the cottage is a fieldstone

barn, three stories high. The exterior is plastered with mud and decorated with dull orange paint. The whole area is permeated by the smell the peat fires and the malted barley roasting in the loft.

The place is run by Anker, a woman of gigantic proportions, and her husband, Busby, a nocker from the Kingdom of Alba. Niall's balefire burns the peat. Normally the commoner clanns would take issue to this, but it doesn't seem to bother them. That is understandable because Niall agreed never to set foot in the place as long as he was kept well-stocked. Also, many of the clans contribute barley and oats in return for the nectar of the

fae, Glenfhada Scotch. They can't afford to argue with Anker or Busby about anything.

The Conon River

Beware the fell lady and the dark reaches of the Conon.

— Susan MacGillis, boggan of Clann Cromarty

The Conon River has many twisting stretches and deep, murky pools. During floods when its waters rise and straighten their course, their pull is murderous, as many a poor Highlander has discovered. Tales of kelpies and other evil water spirits along the river abound.

The most-famous tale concerns a section of the river which flows through some woods called Conon House. In the darkest section of the woods, the river forms two pools; though their surfaces are calm, they are deep and the river's eddies can still pull down a horse. The kelpie of this pool could call a man to his doom.

One fall day, a few men were working in the woods when a beautiful, dark woman rose out of the deepest pool and stood on its surface. She pointed at one of the men, who immediately began running toward the pool. The others grabbed him and dragged him to a ruined church, shutting him inside. They watched over him all night, but the next day found him drowned in the ruined church's stone baptismal font.

Glen Coe, Western Highlands

Many places have evil reputations. Few, at first seeming, live up to those reputations.... In Scotland, the Pass of Glencoe, the scene of the infamous massacre, is one of those few.

— Alastair MacLean, *When Eight Bells Toll*

A lonely, deep glen, this is the site of the infamous and treacherous massacre of the MacDonalds by the Campbells. The massacre occurred because the MacDonalds' chief would not swear loyalty to William III of England. The king's Scottish factor sent the Campbells, the MacDonalds' rivals, to punish the clan. Claiming the ancient right of hospitality, the Campbells were welcomed onto the MacDonald's lands and given food and shelter for a week. At the end of that time, February 13, 1692, they betrayed the ancient right and murdered their hosts. When one looks upon the barren moorland and the steep sides of the glen, one can imagine how the MacDonalds had no chance to hide from their murderers. This site and its history are burned into the Scottish mind. Hard feelings for the English and the Scots who did their bidding are focused on the once-bloodstained sedge of this glen.

True to the paradox of the Scots, Glen Coe attracts both scoundrels and heroes. It is the place of pilgrimage for Scottish nationalists, and is one of the favorite meeting places of the Shadow Court, and the Unseelie in general.

Loch Ness

The great beast of the lake has an ancient history. It is said that St. Columba frightened the creature away sometime around A.D. 560. It is reputed to have killed a few people, but its main function now seems to be posing for out-of-focus pictures.

There are several legends behind the source of the loch's name. One states that it comes from an Irish hero named Nysus, who was the first to sail the length of the lake. Others claim that a woman once went to a spring at the bottom of a huge glen. The spring began flowing so fast that she ran to the top of one of the glen's ridges and looked back, only to see the loch. Unbelieving she said, "Tha loch ann a nis!" (There is a lake in it now!) Therefore, it was named Loch Ness.

Minutes of the Last Meeting of the Loch Lads

— Uninnseann, Honorary Secretary

Today's visit to Glenfhada was more eventful than others. Not that he needs a reason, but Busby was pissed because Anker had given over one of the drying lofts for a meeting of the Loch Lads. When I asked who they were, he just pointed to the ladder leading to the loft and walked out of the room. I found a quiet corner behind some hand-sewn bags of barley and let my perception travel up the ladder and into the malted barley room. There I heard....

Lord Bubastis: [Bubastis has white feathers in his hair. His pointed chin and nose give his face a beaked look. I found out later that he can turn into a puffin.] What do you mean you can't get any more foam rubber, Colin? I need foam rubber. I'm Lord of the Loch this year and this is my gag; I won the wrestling match fair and square!

Jeremy: [Jeremy is a compact man with a bald head. His skin has a silvery hue and he has a very prominent jaw. He sat with Bubastis on a crate.] Fair! We wrestled on land. I'm a salmon, dammit!

Lord Bubastis: Rules are rules! Besides, we've other kippers to dry.

Colin: [Colin spent most of the time burrowing in otter form through the foot-or-so of barley that was drying in the room.] Stop baiting him, Boobie!

Jeremy and Lord Bubastis: [Both leaping onto the startled, barley-bespeckled otter.] Punishment!

The three engaged in Stooge-like combat for about 10 minutes. I don't feel that I can do justice describing just what it is like to see a salmon, puffin and otter eye-gouging, kicking and tail-slapping one another.

Their daring plan was made clear in between assorted puns, lies, wedgies, whoopee cushions and a chimerical food fight. In order to preserve my hiding spot, I had to enact a simple spell to allow myself to laugh later rather than at the time. By the time Busby literally swept them down the stairs, they had a nearly cunning plan to build a fake dinosaur head which would attempt to "devour" a research sub in Loch Ness, or at least long enough for the submarine to take a few thousand feet of film.



The Trossachs

Ben Lomond...in its simple majesty, clout-capt or bare, and descending to a point at the head of the lake, shews the Trossachs beyond, tumbling about their blue ridges like woods waving...where solitude and peace might make their lasting home, if peace were to be found in solitude!

— William Hazlitt, *Letter to James Sheridan Knowles*

The Trossachs span part of the central region and of Fife. This land is blessed with incredible beauty, poised as it is at the meeting place of the Lowlands and Highlands. It was the old stomping ground of Rob Roy.

Now it is the eye of a storm growing in Caledonia. It is the place where the borders of the Kingdoms of Alba and Dalriada meet, and therefore the front lines of Highland clans. The beauty of forest and loch is often stained red with blood, and the darker stains of betrayal and murder.

Recently, the Questing Beast has been spotted here, which has fostered heavily-armed sidhe hunting parties into the Trossachs. Seeing the creature is the newest fad in all the sidhe courts. The clans have taken advantage of this, and many a brave knight has been set upon by the commoners. Most have just been stripped, but a few have been ransomed or killed.

The Pine Stand

The mighty sidhe are as blind as ever. The Questing Beast has led them here to my bower, but do they listen? Their avarice and pride

stuffs up their ears like maggots filling the body of fat cony! It will devour them in the end! Now get me a mocha latte!

— Lailoken, ghille dhu

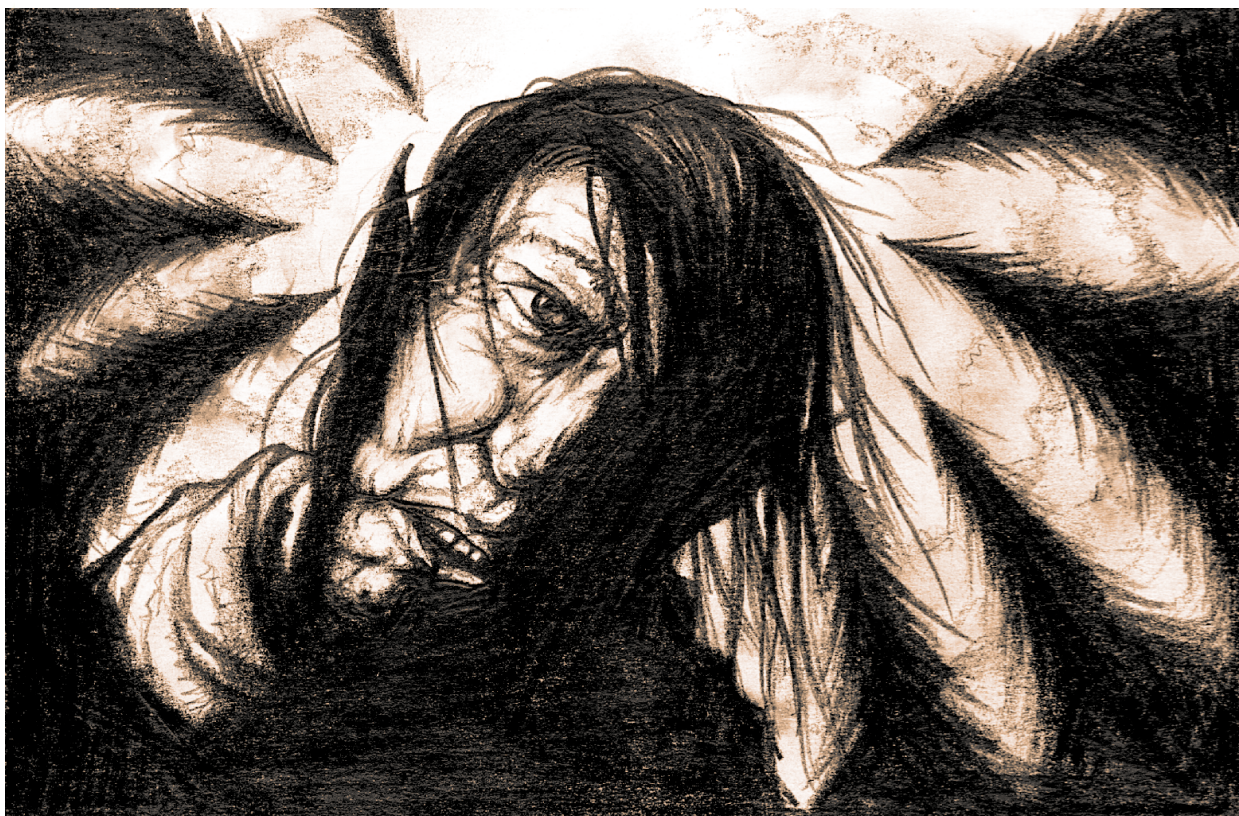
The Pine Stand is found somewhere in the Shadow of Ben Venue, but only ghille dhu, or fae led by them, can find it. This is the bower (glade) of two ghille dhu, Lailoken and Eòghann. Lailoken is ancient and is Eòghann's mad mentor. Few other fae have seen Lailoken, and he seems bored by the politics of Caledonia. His goal is the rebirth of the Tuath Glas Cu, the Barren Pool of Scotland. Fearing his own Winter before his mission can be completed, he sends Eòghann to combat Dr. Erskine and his Dauntain, but Eòghann has so far been unsuccessful. His greatest enemy is the Bedlam which always creeps at his heels.

Aberfoyle Cloister, Central

The Scots have a superstitious reliance on the efficacy of going constantly to church. Many of them may be said to pass their lives there, for they go almost without ceasing, and look so sorrowful...as if they were going, not only to bury their sins, but themselves.

— Captain Edward Topham, *Letters from Edinburgh*

Near the old Kirk of Aberfoyle sits a small house once used as the church's cloister. Its minister in the late 1600s was Robert Kirk, a Presbyterian. Kirk published a book called *The Secret Common-Wealth*, an earnest account of the fae races and their natures. Unlike previous books on the fae, it did not equate the fae with witches or demonic forces, but approached them as a



natural phenomenon. Soon after publication of the book, he was found unconscious on a fairy knoll located near the church. Many believed that he had been kidnapped, and the person delivering their sermons after his abduction was of fae stock. A few months after he returned, Kirk suddenly died. On the day of his funeral, his ghostly image appeared to his brother and pleaded to free him from the land of the fae. To free him the brother had to wait for the instant of Kirk's unborn son's Christening, and then stab Kirk's chair with a knife. A year later, all the relatives gathered together at the little house behind the church for the Christening. At the moment the water touched the babe's head, several apparitions capered around the house; one seemed to be Kirk, but the others were monstrous. Kirk's brother was so afraid that he missed the opportunity, and Kirk was never seen again.

The Isles: The Orkneys and Shetlands

*Orkney lay athwart a great sea-way
from Viking times onwards, and its lore
is crowded with sailors, merchants, adventurers,
pilgrims, smugglers, storms and sea-changes.
The shores are strewn with wrack, jetsam,
occasional treasure.*

— George Mackay Brown

The 67 Orkney islands are the most fertile of the island archipelagos. These low-lying, windswept islands support crops of

barley, oats and turnips and herds of cattle and sheep. Nowadays, North Sea petroleum dominates the economy of these islands.

The 100 or more isles of the Shetland archipelago are the most from the Scottish mainland. The land is low, wet and spongy, and the sea carves the shoreline into strange forms. Many of the islands look like mesas rising from the sea. Shepherds taking their animals to new pastures often have to haul their animals by rope and pulley to the soft tablelands.

The fae of these stormy islands are dominated by trolls. Fierce and independent, these trolls only give their loyalty to those warriors who can best them in battle. The thanes (knights) and jarls gather together in loose bands to war upon each other, or to sell their services to the fae of the Isle of the Mighty.

Asa is the most powerful troll in the Orkneys and Shetlands. A jarl of immense power, she controls a huge number of troll thanes. Niall, one of Alba's artificers, created a magic longship for her, in payment for the times her warriors have supported the armies of Alba.

Dwarfie Stane, Hoy and Gramsay, Orkney

*A day and night on the cold stone bed, and the ogre king's blood
will be yours.*

— Troll saying, Orkneys

The Dwarfie Stane is a huge block of sandstone forming a rough rectangle perhaps 20 feet long, eight feet deep and six feet high. The inside of the block has been hollowed out. Each

end contains a carven stone bed, complete with pillows. A small hole is carved above each stone bed.

Fae legend has it that an ogre king and queen of the Isles were deposed for their barbarity and locked into the stone. Food was dropped through the holes. Eventually they went mad and killed each other. Any troll who can spend a day and a night lying on the bed is supposed to be given the strength of the ogre king and all of his victims.

Trolls

All the faeries of the Shetlands were traditionally identified as trolls. Popular superstition claims that they were ugly, wore gray clothes, were fond of the fiddle and only came out at night. Trolls and their legends are so popular that they creep into ordinary speech and even place names: Trolla Stack and Trolldale Water, for example. Here are some examples of troll-influenced local terms:

Trows — Troll (pl. trowie); dwarf, dwarfie also refers to the same creatures.

Trollet — Misshapen.

Trollamog — A mischievous person.

Trollmolet — “Troll-mouthed,” surly.

Trollaplukk — A slow-moving clod.

Trowie Knowe — Chambered cairns that dot the Shetlands. These mounds were the homes of the trolls, and it is said that the faeries music can still be heard at night. The most important Trowie Knowe is known by that same name at Northmavine, Shetland.

Haltadans, Fetlar, Shetlands

An angry troll always has time to dance a jig.

—Shetlander Proverb

The name *haltadans* means “the limping dance,” the steps of which are still known to the people of the Shetlands. Legend has it that the dance tune was taught to the people by the trolls.

The term also describes a group of low stones with two slightly higher stones in its center. The outer ring of stone represents a group of trolls and the center figures are the troll fiddler and his wife. If someone can play the original version of the haltadans song, the figures will animate.

Ve Skerries, Shetland

Don't touch the sea-trows skin!

— Orkney Proverb

The Ve Skerries is a group of rocks northwest of the Isle of Papa Stour. It was believed to be the homes of many selkies. There is a tale that one day a ship landed and collected the skins of several seals laying on Ve Skerries. One of the fishermen was left behind when the sea grew rough, and he saw the sea-trows, which had been scared off by the men, return. They explained that without their animal skins they were unable to return to their underwater kingdom. Other seals peeled off their skins and revealed that they were also selkies. One of these, a beautiful selkie named Gioga, offered to take the fisherman home if he promised to get the others' skins back. He agreed, and she bore him on her back to Papa Stour. He and Gioga had many misadventures, but managed to get all the seal skins back.







Chapter Six: Lads and Lasses

The Scots have labored under hard stereotypes: cheap-skates, drunkards, bullies and barbarians, to name a few. Like any people, they are a mix of opposites. They are proud of their heritage, but mindful of their darker history. There are frugal Scots and Scots who are generous. There are Scots who are greedy

and materialistic and Scots whose faces shine with tears at the skirl of the pipes or the lilting words of a Burns' recital. Scots are: brewers, businessmen, priests, pagans, fishermen, firemen, athletes, accountants, Highlanders, Islanders and Lowlanders. All Scots together.

The Clans

The clan system of government ended with the defeat of Bonnie Prince Charlie in 1746 at the battle of Culloden, although it survives vestigially and with some romance in popular culture. "Clan" differs from "clann" in that the former term refers to humans rather than fae.

Originally, as with all Celts, the Scotti and their ancestors organized themselves in extended families called clans. (The "Mac" and "Mc" of many Scottish names means "son of.") Family branches were called septs, but sept members were not in the direct line of succession from the clan's founding ancestor. This common ancestor usually is said to have come from Ireland, but Icelandic families and even mythical beings also spawned clans.

The chief was believed to be semi-divine and as such, loyalty to him was absolute. The chieftain was the only person who actually owned anything of value; all items and lands were dispensed to his followers due to their rank and service. Positions such as war leaders, banner carriers and bards were often hereditary.

Tartans are an 18th- and 19th-century addition to clan lore. Clans also had badges and particular slogans. The badges began as flowers or sprigs of plants, which were pinned to the bonnet or clothing during battle to identify friend and foe. Slogans rallied one's clansmen before or during a fight. The importance of slogans points to the significance of oratory in clan life. A chieftain or his druid or bard always spoke before great events, especially battles, glorifying the ancestry of the clan's warriors and belittling that of the opponents.

For example, the badge of Clan Fergusson is a honey bee atop a thistle; The family slogan is "Dulcius ex asperis," meaning, "Sweetness out of difficulty."

The Kithain

Historically, the most populous kith in Scotland were the sidhe, redcaps, boggans and nockers. Of course some sluagh lived in the labyrinths beneath the various mountain ranges. With the construction of sewers many slough moved to the cities of the Central Belt. Satyrs were often mistaken for the devil in ancient Scotland, and their numbers are still few. Selkies are all over the islands although their numbers have diminished on the Shetlands due to the Murchison oil fields.

Seelie

The Seelie court of Caledonia has two related concerns: the War of Ivy and Caledonia's lack of a high king. Most nobles feel that a high king could galvanize the forces and resources of the separate kingdoms and finally take the Cridhe from the commoners.

Caledonia is ripe for a (high) kingmaker. Duke Leyden was the favorite for this position, since it was commonly believed that most of Ross' political successes, such as his victory over the Kingdom of Dew, were due to Leyden's machinations. Since Leyden has turned to the Unseelie, those hopes seem dashed. Although many sidhe feel that Ross would make a good high king, many feel that he cannot take the post by himself. Now nobles whisper about matching Queen Glynis and King Ross, but neither royal has voiced an opinion on the subject. Some have even heard rumors that Ross plans to marry a countess from Wales, but that seems like idle talk. Niall is the favorite of most of the commoners, but his obsession with the Contrivancy makes most of the nobles wary of a "clockwork" throne.

Unseelie

The commoner Unseelie are slow to accept sidhe claiming to be Unseelie. Only recently have commoner Unseelie groups like the Ban-Durrage associated with the sidhe. The sidhe Unseelie, such as Duke Leyden, have found these commoners are difficult to manipulate. Leyden's loss of control of the Ban-Durrage is a serious loss of standing with the Unseelie. Many of the once-socialist Seelie commoners have become Unseelie anarchists since the War of Ivy. They will never accept a sidhe in their midst.

Kingdom of Dalriada

The kingdom has many sidhe subjects, but commoners fill most of the ranks of the islands. The nobles are extremely loyal to Ross but they are beginning to murmur amongst themselves. They would rather Ross move his capitol to Edinburgh, yet he ignores their plights. More seriously, he has no queen, much less an heir. Many have subtly proposed Glynis or Rachel, and some have even whispered that one of the beautiful countesses of Wales would make a good wife.

Ross, King of Dalriada

Ross hit the ground running during the War of Ivy. He and his majordomo, Leyden, rallied the sidhe in and around



Glasgow and turned them into one of the fiercest fighting forces on the Isle of the Mighty. He has always led from the front, and his personal skill and bravery so impressed the nocker general defending the city that when Ross charged his lines (and many of the commoner forces broke and ran) the general met Ross on bended knee and presented him his sword. With the legions of commoners won over by his bravery, Ross carved out one of the largest kingdoms in Caledonia. Since the end of the War of Ivy, he has tripled the influence of his kingdom, gaining the Hebrides and the jewel of Caledonia, Edinburgh, and the Tuath of Dew.

Ross means to conquer all of Caledonia, by whatever means necessary. He has struck upon a scheme that may grant him the wayward Highlands, the very heart of Caledonia. If Ross could convince the Highland clanns that a dire threat menaces Scotland, he just might be able to rally their support and thus learn the secrets of Wallace's Walk. Ross believes that a goaded English or Welsh attack on Caledonia's borders might be the catalyst he needs. Yet at this point, he waits to carry his plan to fruition.

Ross is plagued by nightmares. In his dreams, it is his brother, Calum Erskine, not he who sits on the throne of Caledonia. Ross fears these dreams; he doesn't know if they're an extension of childhood competition or truly prescient.

Court: Seelie

Legacies: Paladin/Fatalist

House: Gwydion

Seeming: Wilder

Kith: Sidhe

Physical: Strength 4, Dexterity 3, Stamina 4

Social: Charisma 5, Manipulation 4, Appearance 4

Mental: Perception 3, Intelligence 2, Wits 5

Talents: Alertness 4, Athletics 4, Brawl 2, Diplomacy 3, Dodge 3, Expression 1, Interrogation 2, Intimidation 5, Intrigue 3, Kenning 3, Sense Deception 1, Subterfuge 5

Skills: Acrobatics 1, Archery 3, Dancing 2, Drive 1, Etiquette 3, Falconry 1, Hunting 1, Leadership 4, Melee 4, Ride 3

Knowledge: Enigmas 1, Heraldry 3, Law 1, Lore (Seelie Court) 3, Politics 4

Arts: Primal 4, Sovereign 5, Wayfare 3

Realms: Actor 3, Fae 4, Nature 1, Scene 4

Backgrounds: Dreamers 3, Gremayre 3, Holdings 4, Political Connections 3, Resources 5, Retinue 5, Title 6, Treasure 4, Trod 5

Glamour: 6

Banality: 5

Willpower: 8

Treasures: Ross' greatsword grants him an automatic two actions in combat and gives him two dice added to any Sovereign cantrip. When the sword is held in his hands, thunder rolls in the distance. Dealanach (Gaelic for lightning), hangs above his throne, unsheathed at all times. (Ross unsheathed it after the Battle of Dew and Tears, and he has sworn not to sheathe it until he is high king of all Caledonia.) The pommel is the body of a griffin, the guards are its wings, and the blade is its tongue. A ruby is inset at the base of the blade, representing the griffin's eyes.

Image: In is mortal seeming Russell Erskine appears to be a man in his early thirties, although he should look about 15 years older. He wears his red hair in a tight braid and dresses in gray or black suits. In his fae seeming, Ross' mane of red hair is his most distinguishing feature. He wears it loose and it falls far below his shoulders. This wild look is intensified by his black eyes that flicker with an inner light, especially while he is towering over persons who displease him. Ross is fond of holding meetings, or making nobles wait, while he spars with his knights. His physique is impressive; he lacks the willowy look that so many sidhe ladies find attractive, for he is tall and broad.

Roleplaying Hints: Listen. Intimidate. Command. You are a man with an impending doom. You must unite Caledonia before you die. The night you awoke on this Earth a chimerical griffin told you that. Though you have never divulged this secret meeting, it drives you beyond all other distractions. You have grown short-tempered of late. There is a key to Caledonia, but it eludes you. You have not conquered any territory in four years and your wilder years slip from you. In the dark heart of the night, dreams plague you. You will give almost anything for that key to the throne, possibly even your honor.

Gruach

Gruach combines the attributes of a dark beauty with sin and danger. Ross' lover for the past few years, she has wormed her way into court of late, much to the distress of Dalriada's courtiers. Many fae in the Tuath of Iron whisper of her connections to the Shadow's Market and possibly even the Monkey's Paw. No one knows her true motivations.

The sluagh first came to court at the behest of Duke Leyden. Shrewd observers think she may well have been his mistress before she became Ross', that he gave her favors in return for her insights into the court. Leyden's plan backfired, however, when she became the favorite of Ross and turned her back on

the duke. Gruach has a Lowland accent, though she has never spoken of her life before coming to Dalriada.

Court: Unseelie

Legacies: Rogue/Sage

Seeming: Wilder

Kith: Sluagh

Physical: Strength 2, Dexterity 3, Stamina 2

Social: Charisma 3, Manipulation 4, Appearance 4

Mental: Perception 3, Intelligence 2, Wits 3

Talents: Acting 1, Alertness 3, Diplomacy 1, Intrigue 3, Kenn-
ing 1, Seduction 2, Subterfuge 3

Skills: Dancing 2, Etiquette 1, Stealth 3

Knowledge: Area Knowledge (Dalriada) 2, Enigmas 2, Lore (Forbidden Secrets) 2, Lore (Seelie) 2, Lore (Unseelie) 3, Mythlore 2, Poisons 1, Politics 2

Arts: Chicanery 2, Primal 3, Soothsay 1, Sovereign 1, Wayfare 2

Realms: Actor 1, Fae 3, Scene 3

Backgrounds: Contacts 2, Gremayre 1, Patron 5, Political Connections 5, Resources 3

Glamour: 5

Banality: 5

Willpower: 7

Image: Bone thin, with chalk-white skin, Gruach is nonetheless alluring. Her shadowed sapphire eyes speak of promises in the dark, and her floor-length black hair is silky and soft. She usually wears tight leather bodices over long, crinkled silk skirts, and not much else! Gruach's one weakness is fine jewelry; she fairly drips with it when dressed for court.

Roleplaying Hints: Tell people enough to gain their attention, even if it means giving away a minor secret. Then, gently press them for useful information, making them feel guilty about not repaying your kindness should they balk.



Tuath of Iron

The Tuath of Iron is a perfect example of the duality of Caledonian fae life. The populace is dominated by sidhe. Drawn there by Ross' power and personality, knights stride the parks and playgrounds of the rich. The Tuath is also the axis of power for the Unseelie. Its sewers are the circus of the Ban-Durrug, and its shadows are sanctuary for assassins.

Duke Leyden of House Fiona

Duke Leyden's change from a Seelie wilder to an Unseelie grump caused less of a splash in the kingdom than expected. Long believed to be the kingmaker, the wits behind Ross' might and dash, Leyden and his fall is seen by envious sidhe courtiers as a reward for the Duke's passion for plots and political maneuvering. Courtiers from House Eiluned watch his movements with disguised admiration.

Leyden has gathered together a group of spies and assassins, named the Black Watch, in case he no longer feels that his old friend, Ross, is capable of ruling. He has also forged relationships with the Shadow's Market and the Ban-Durrug. Unfortunately he has lost control of his most influential spy, Gruach. Still, he waits in the darkness of his rath, contemplating his woes and the good fortune of his best friend. One day his hate will finish eating his heart and he will strike. Till then, the Black Watch swells in the sunless places of the Tuath of Iron, pregnant with anticipation.

Court: Unseelie

Legacies: Fatalist/Regent

House: Fiona

Seeming: Grump

Kith: Sidhe

Physical: Strength 3, Dexterity 3, Stamina 2

Social: Charisma 3, Manipulation 4, Appearance 3

Mental: Perception 4, Intelligence 3, Wits 4



Talents: Alertness 3, Athletics 1, Brawl 1, Diplomacy 3, Empathy 1, Intimidation 2, Kenning 3, Seduction 1, Sense Deception 2, Subterfuge 3

Skills: Archery 3, Dancing 2, Drive 1, Etiquette 3, Firearms 1, Leadership 3, Melee 2, Ride 1, Stealth 1

Knowledges: Area Knowledge (Dalriada) 4, Enigmas 2, Heraldry 4, Law 2, Mythlore 1, Occult 1, Politics 5

Arts: Chronos 4, Legerdemain 2, Primal 4, Soothsay 1, Sovereign 5, Wayfare 3

Realms: Actor 4, Fae 5, Prop 2, Scene 3

Backgrounds: Chimera 4, Contacts 5, Gremayre 3, Political Connections 5, Resources 4, Retinue 2, Title 5, Treasures 4

Glamour: 4

Banality: 5

Willpower: 8

Treasures: Duke Leyden has two Treasures. The first is a small crystal decanter of blown glass, filled with an amber liquid. This liquor is the Elixir of Danu; warming and delicious to sip, the stuff acts as an incredibly powerful truth drug. The imbiber's Willpower drops one point per turn for 1-10 turns, though the victim may become aware of this with a successful Perception + Alertness roll (difficulty 8). The problem is, the victim won't want to stop drinking the elixir until his glass is empty, nor will he recall the specific effects once they recover.

The second treasure is Claon, an ashwood longbow, a gift from a former Fianna lover in Ireland. Carved with knotwork, stags and lions, the bow is easy to pull yet allows a +1 bonus to a Dexterity + Archery roll. However, the arrows it fires become invisible.

Image: Leyden is no longer young, but still is incredibly handsome. Tall and muscular, he stays in good shape for a man of his years. His close-cropped hair is an elegant silver, and his dark-blue eyes flash with wisdom and power. Leyden wears simple but elegant dress, usually black-linen tunics under an embroidered silk House Fiona surcoat.

Roleplaying Hints: You still possess the passion and fervor of your house, but you keep it under tight rein. You are very disappointed in Gruach, and if you could strike upon a plan that would leave you free from accusations, you would take action against her. For many years you upheld goodness and honor; now, it's time to enjoy how the other half lives.

Lorna Barnes (Tinker's Damn)

Lorna Barnes always wanted to create music, whether through song or instruments. The problem was that Lorna was hopelessly tone-deaf. Her teachers always made her be silent in choir, only allowing her to move her lips while the other children sang. She couldn't even pass the entry test for children's orchestra. Yet, Lorna still loved music, spending all her money on CDs and additions to her sound system. Then, in her late teens, her faerie nature blossomed, and Lorna had a new lease on her dream.

Lorna now lives out her fantasies by producing music machines; these include harps, recorders, harpsichords, psalteries, accordions and, of late, highly complex clockwork synthesizers. Lorna still can't sing, but she is happier now that others can appreciate her musical talent. The young nocker fervently hopes for a position with the bards or within the court of a noble.



Court: Seelie
Legacies: Crafter/Wretch
Seeming: Wilder
Kith: Nocker
Physical: Strength 2, Dexterity 3, Stamina 3
Social: Charisma 2, Manipulation 2, Appearance 3
Mental: Perception 3, Intelligence 4, Wits 4
Talents: Alertness 2, Artistic Expression (Music Appreciation) 4, Empathy 2, Expression 2, Kenning 2
Skills: Carpentry 4, Crafts 4, Drive 1, Jeweler 2, Mechanic 3
Knowledges: Computer 2, Science (Metallurgy) 4
Arts: Chicanery 2, Legerdemain 3, Primal 1, Wayfare 2
Realms: Fae 2, Prop 4
Backgrounds: Dreamers 2, Gremayre 1, Resources 2
Glamour: 6
Banality: 2
Willpower: 6

Image: Lorna appears younger than her 22 years, and she is relatively cheerful for a nocker. In mortal seeming, she has shoulder-length brown hair, brown eyes and a light build. As a nocker, her eyes are dark garnet; she generally wears her spiky hair in two pig-tails. Lorna prefers to wear thick sweaters and long tartan skirts, even while working. She looks like a wayward school girl with her white skin and pink cheeks,

Roleplaying Hints: Never miss a chance to hear a performance or meet a musician. You stand in awe of anyone who creates melody from the instruments you make, so fawn accordingly.

Fearchar (Shadows' Market)

Fearchar mimics the sluagh in his preference for whispering, but the sluagh are much too pretentious killers for his tastes. He prefers the quiet precision and esthetics of poison. Fearchar will go to great lengths to diversify his stash of fatal potions. One favorite is the poison

in two parts; each element in itself is harmless. But when the two come together, a virtually untraceable death results. Fearchar often employs down-on-their-luck fae and mortals to make trips around Scotland to gather certain herbs and animals for him. Rarely, though, do these poor patsies realize exactly what they're getting themselves into. Fearchar can come across as a very kind patron, if he chooses.

A master chef in human seeming, Fearchar runs Bana Sithean, "The White Fairy Hill," one of the best restaurants in Glasgow. Fearchar's twisted sense of morality prohibits him from ever performing a hit in the restaurant proper; however, he often uses it as a place for meeting clients and brokering in lives. On the other hand, he isn't at all above sabotaging other fine eating establishments, and more than one restaurant has gone out of business after a food poisoning scandal.

Court: Unseelie

Legacies: Savage/Paladin

Seeming: Wilder

Kith: Satyr

Physical: Strength 3, Dexterity 3, Stamina 4

Social: Charisma 4, Manipulation 4, Appearance 3

Mental: Perception 2, Intelligence 3, Wits 3

Talents: Alertness 3, Carousing 2, Intimidation 2, Intrigue 4, Seduction 2, Streetwise 3, Style 1, Subterfuge 3

Skills: Brewing 1, Cooking 5, Drive 1, Etiquette 3

Knowledges: Dream Lore 1, Enigmas 3, Herbalism 4, Law 1, Linguistics 2, Medicine 1, Occult 2, Poisons 5

Arts: Chicanery 1, Chronos 2, Legerdemain 3, Primal 3, Soothsay 2, Sovereign 1

Realms: Actor 5, Fae 3, Prop 3

Backgrounds: Contacts 3, Dreamers 3, Gremayre 1, Political Connections 2, Resources 4

Glamour: 6

Banality: 5

Willpower: 8



Image: In his human seeming as Stewart MacDonough, Fearchar is a sharp dresser. He wears tailor-made suits, a fresh carnation in his lapel and an elegant Rolex. His clear gray eyes and dark hair make him irresistible to female customers. When in the kitchen, he dons the usual black-checked pants and white tunic; the kitchen is his studio, and he keeps only the best equipment there. As a satyr, Fearchar's hair is a deep chestnut brown. He constantly wears a polite smile, never revealing his true nature.

Roleplaying Hints: Act charming and genteel to the clientele, and never lose your temper with anyone. Nothing ever ruffles you too badly. Answer slights with a quick and definite response. Use others accordingly; they're here solely for your benefit, anyway.

Tuath of Dew

The Tuath of Dew boasts a wider variety of fae than any other kingdom. As the place for artists in Scotland, you couldn't keep the fae away with a cold-iron broom. Under Duchess Flora's orders, the Knights of Dew deal very harshly with any Kithain who dares to ravage an artist in the tuath.

Duchess Flora

As long as she can remember, Flora Sinclair has loved flowers. As a child, she grew tulips in window boxes at her family's Edinburgh flat. When she got older, she took as many courses in horticulture and botany as the state school curriculum allowed. Finally, Flora was able to secure a loan and open her own florist shop and greenhouse. Here, the young boggan nurtures fine Dutch tulips, Japanese irises and delicate Hawaiian orchids, with the help of two large chimerical ladybugs that keep away pests. Along the way, she also picked up an interest in continental philosophy. A recent addition to her flower boutique is a salon. In the evenings, this is a premiere gathering place for closet intellectuals who wish to debate the finer points of high thought.

Some of Flora's most devoted patrons are members of Clan Toreador. She and the Kindred are mutually respectful of each other and, truth to tell, Flora enjoys their company. Discussing the finer points of Descartes is much more fascinating when one member of the company has actually met the philosopher!

Court: Seelie

Legacies: Courtier/Peacock

Seeming: Wilder

Kith: Boggan

Physical: Strength 2, Dexterity 2, Stamina 3

Social: Charisma 3, Manipulation 2, Appearance 2

Mental: Perception 3, Intelligence 4, Wits 3

Talents: Alertness 1, Artistic Expression 4, Diplomacy 2, Empathy 2, Intrigue 1

Skills: Crafts 4, Drive 1, Etiquette 3, Leadership 3, Storytelling 1

Knowledges: Enigmas 2, History 3, Linguistics 2, Literature 4, Lore (Kindred) 3, Mythlore 1, Occult 1, Psychology 1, Theology 1

Arts: Chicanery 2, Legerdemain 3, Primal 1, Wayfare 2

Realms: Nature 4, Prop 2, Scene 2

Backgrounds: Chimera 2, Dreamers 1, Resources 3, Title 5, Trod 3



Glamour: 6

Banality: 4

Willpower: 6

Image: Pleasantly plump and just about five-and-a-half-feet tall, Flora usually dons a plain skirt, twin-set and apron while in her shop. As a human, she has green eyes and light-brown hair, usually worn in a ponytail. When dressing for court, Flora gets quite formal, in a sweeping gown of green satin embroidered with lilies and thistles. As a boggan, she becomes a bit shorter and more stout.

Roleplaying Hints: You love creating beauty with your flowers, happily taking care of the needs of nobles and commoners alike. But you're also an incredibly intelligent woman, and the nightly repartees in the salon charge you with energy. You are pleased that you can entertain the Toreador, for they are an intellectual commodity, even if they are dead.

Tuath of Shadow

The Tuath of Shadow is heavily populated with boggans, nockers and trolls. Bethag and the few knights under her control are constantly negotiating with clann chieftains and participating in arrests and a few skirmishes.

Bethag of House Scathach, Warlord of the Isles

Bethag has a daunting presence. Standing seven-and-a-quarter feet tall, she towers over most sidhe and even a few trolls. Her fighting prowess is legendary and she runs a kendo dojo in her mortal seeming. Many sidhe knights swallow their pride and pledge service to her cause (she will take no squires) for the opportunity of learning from the greatest fencer in Caledonia.

Bethag hates being Ross' vassal and abhors being a leader of a tuath, but her sense of duty and honor runs so deep that she cannot turn her back on the commoners. Much to her surprise,



she has grown to like a few of the sidhe knights who have come to her for training.

Her greatest fear is that one day Ross will discover her knowledge of a trod connecting the Near Isle Trods with Wallace's Walk. This is the fabled key to the Highlands that Ross so badly needs to rout the clanns. Bethag would almost rather die than give up the secret of this trod.

Court: Seelie

Legacies: Regent/Beast

House: Scathach

Seeming: Wilder

Kith: Sidhe

Physical: Strength 3, Dexterity 4, Stamina 4

Social: Charisma 4, Manipulation 2, Appearance 4

Mental: Perception 3, Intelligence 2, Wits 3

Talents: Alertness 4, Athletics 3, Brawl 2, Diplomacy 1, Dodge 4, Empathy 2, Intimidation 2, Kenning 1

Skills: Acrobatics 1, Archery 2, Blind Fighting 1, Dancing 1, Drive 1, Etiquette 1, Fast-Draw 2, Leadership 3, Melee 5, Ride 2, Stealth 1, Survival 1

Knowledges: Area Knowledge (The Isles) 2, Heraldry 3, Politics 2

Arts: Dream-Craft 3, Legerdemain 2, Primal 2, Soothsay 1, Wayfare 4

Realms: Fae 5, Scene 4

Backgrounds: Contacts 2, Holdings 3, Political Connections 2, Resources 2, Retinue 2, Title 3, Treasures 2, Trod 5

Glamour: 5

Banality: 2

Willpower: 7

Treasures: Bethag owns a beautiful claymore. While not magical, the sword is well-balanced and very sharp. The pommel is set with an amber stone containing a large dragonfly.

Image: In her sidhe seeming, she prefers a loose black shirt and tights for ease of fighting. Bethag's hair is long and flows like gold; her eyes are large and violet.

Roleplaying Hints: You have little use for most foppish sidhe courtiers, being a woman of action, not words. Still, if someone comes to you with a genuine desire to learn and serve, you're willing to give him a try. Act stern and bluff everyone, lest they suspect you have a kind heart.

The Bardic College

The Bardic College is a secret association of master fae, mages and Garou artists. This group meets periodically on the Isle of Skye. Under Alasdair, a Master Bard, a few have begun a Domesday Book, a survey of all things supernatural in Caledonia.

Alasdair of House Fiona, Master Bard, Nàdurachd of the Bardic College

Nominally attached to The Kingdom of Three Hills, Alasdair MacInnes is a wilder sidhe, and prefers the freedom of the road. In his human seeming he is a piano tuner, which allows him to travel all over the country, no questions asked. He has never turned his back on his human side, and still keeps up with all the musical trends and his numerous relatives. He is a master of the highland pipes, the harp and the flute, and his voice is known to make even redcaps weep. He is good friends with Lorna Barnes and has been largely responsible for spreading word of her instrument sales among other bards.

The Domesday Book is his first foray into the world of politics, not counting satirical songs. Alasdair knows that he is risking much, but his greatest loyalty is to his art. He will risk all to protect it. Little does he know that darker forces are carefully watching him, waiting for the sidhe to overstep his bounds and meet with an unpleasant accident.

Court: Seelie

Legacies: Troubadour/Fool

House: Fiona

Seeming: Wilder

Kith: Sidhe

Physical: Strength 2, Dexterity 3, Stamina 3

Social: Charisma 5, Manipulation 3, Appearance 4

Mental: Perception 3, Intelligence 2, Wits 3

Talents: Acting 1, Alertness 3, Artistic Expression 4, Brawl 1, Carousing 1, Empathy 2, Expression 3, Kenning 2, Streetwise 2, Ventriloquism 1

Skills: Dancing 2, Drive 1, Etiquette 2, Game Playing 1, Performance 5, Singing 5, Storytelling 3

Knowledges: Dream Lore 2, Enigmas 2, Heraldry 1, History 2, Literature 1, Lore (Seelie) 3, Lore (Unseelie) 2, Mythlore 3, Occult 1

Arts: Primal 2, Soothsay 2, Sovereign 4, Wayfare 4

Realms: Actor 3, Fae 4, Scene 4



Backgrounds: Contacts 3, Dreamers 2, Gremayre 3, Political Connections 2, Resources 2

Glamour: 5

Banality: 2

Willpower: 5

Image: Alasdair is tall and ruggedly handsome. His reddish-gold hair flows over his strong shoulders. Unlike many sidhe, he wears a beard. The bard prefers a tartan kilt to trews, fastening the garment with an emerald brooch. Alasdair is also one of the nicest men in Caledonia; he's generous, kind and always willing to listen.

Roleplaying Hints: You like people immensely; they're fun to watch and exciting to entertain. But you're also a man of knowledge, collecting it being half the thrill. Cultivate friendships and be open and trusting until someone gives you a reason to do otherwise.

Kingdom of Alba

The Kingdom of Alba is the stronghold of the nockers. Under the generous rule of Niall and the knights of House Dougal, the nockers have built an entire chimerical factory, the Contrivancy. The kingdom also supports a high population of boggans, selkies and trolls. Most of these are found in the coastal villages.

Niall, King of Alba (House Dougal)

When the redcaps attacked, Niall was entering Chrysalis. A motley of nockers saved him from being Ravaged by the foul creatures. The nockers brought him through his Chrysalis and taught him about the cruelties of his kith. He did not have long to learn of his kith or house, for Ross' army swept northward after being rebuffed by King Baird.

Niall, a few other members of House Dougal, and the nockers who Sained him recruited a commoner-based army and headed south

to meet Ross. As the two armies fought, Niall's forces continually grew stronger as sidhe and commoner came to his side. Still they faced defeat, but Asa, Jarl of the Orkneys, led many of her kith down from the north, and they ground over the forces of the griffin like a glacier. Ross, for the first and only time, was forced to retreat.

Wounded by age and the loss of his voice box to cancer, Niall wears his crown heavily.

His grumpdom has seen him evermore distracted by the devices he and his Contrivancy build; many who fear Ross' ambition worry about their king's priorities.

Court: Seelie

Legacies: Regent/Outlaw

House: Dougal

Seeming: Grump

Kith: Sidhe

Physical: Strength 3, Dexterity 2, Stamina 2

Social: Charisma 3, Manipulation 1, Appearance 2

Mental: Perception 3, Intelligence 3, Wits 4

Talents: Brawl 2, Diplomacy 1, Intimidation 2, Kenning 1

Skills: Blacksmith 2, Carpentry 1, Crafts 3, Firearms 1, Gunsmithing 1, Leadership 4, Mechanic 2, Melee 3

Knowledges: Alchemy 1, Computer 1, Heraldry 2, Lore (Seelie) 2, Mythlore 2, Politics 1, Science (Metallurgy) 3

Arts: Legerdemain 4, Primal 3, Pyretics 3, Sovereign 3, Wayfare 2

Realms: Actor 2, Fae 3, Prop 4

Backgrounds: Holdings 4, Political Connections 3, Resources 3, Retinue 4, Title 5, Treasures 3

Glamour: 3

Banality: 5

Willpower: 6

Treasures: The Collar of Command is a strange gorget that allows Niall to speak in a tinny, mechanical voice. His nockers made the item for him after he lost his voice box.



Image: In his normal seeming, Adam Murry is a broad-shouldered, balding man, who is forced to speak through a microphone-like device he presses to his windpipe. In his fae seeming, he is broad and ruddy cheeked.

Roleplaying Hints: You increasingly prefer the solitude of your workshop over the boredom of court. Speak little, but make every word you do say clear and to the point. Take advantage of both the pity and the repulsion others express to you.

Edward Buchanan

Edward is a grump ghille-dhu, once a graduate student of Dr. Erskine. One day, disenchanted with his work, he went into Erskine's study and found one of the doctor's earliest books, a collection of folktales he wrote when an undergraduate. Edward hiked over to a local park and sat down in the middle of the trees to get away from everyone. He didn't believe what he was reading. The stories were filled with joy and wonder. Edward began to grow dizzy and fell into a deep sleep. He awoke in the copse in the middle of the night, but wasn't afraid. When he went down to the pond to drink, the moon's bright light reflected the image of a head covered with vines and bright leaves, and clothes turned into twig and twists of holly. Reborn again, as it should be, Eòghann (YOE wun) walked alone, back into the trees.

Eòghann has confronted Dr. Erskine several times. Once he was arrested and fell into Banality; when he awoke, he was a grump. He does not know much of the other fae in the land. He is driven by his dream to try and save Dr. Erskine and refill the Barren Pool, but doesn't know how to go about it. He wanders the wilderness of the Tossachs, the Orchil Hills and Loch Lomond, avoiding contact with everything now. His desire to complete his mission is tempered by the fear of his fae self's demise.

Court: Seelie

Legacies: Regent/Fatalist

Seeming: Autumn (grump)

Kith: Ghille dhu

Physical: Strength 3, Dexterity 2, Stamina 3

Social: Charisma 3, Manipulation 2, Appearance 3

Mental: Perception 4, Intelligence 3, Wits 3

Talents: Alertness 2, Empathy 3, Kenning 4, Search 2

Skills: Drive 1, First Aid 2, Stealth 1, Survival 3

Knowledges: Area Knowledge (Scotland) 2, Dream Lore 2, Enigmas 2, Linguistics 1, Literature 2, Mythlore 4, Occult 2

Arts: Chicanery 1, Legerdemain 2, Primal 1, Soothsay 3, Wayfare 2

Realms: Actor 1, Nature 3, Scene 2

Backgrounds: Gremayre 4, Resources 1

Glamour: 4

Banality: 5

Willpower: 7

Image: Edward, in mortal seeming, is about 25 years old. He is tall and slender, with warm brown eyes and dark-brown hair. He tends to dress casually in jeans, T-shirts, sneakers and a mackintosh. As a fae, his hair is dark silver, his skin gray-green. Stalks of fading leaves and bits of moss cling to his body.



Roleplaying Hints: You seek seclusion for fear that meeting others will end your fae seeming. Yet, a desire to serve the land before you die makes you feel guilty about your solitude. Rather than destroy Dr. Erskine, you'd prefer to help him. However, your own inhibitions keep you from taking any sort of action, lest it be the wrong one.

Eòghann: Dreams of a Ghille Òhu

Sometimes I almost forget. It's not death I'm afraid of, but failure. It was the old papers of Dr. Erskine that awoke me, but he doesn't believe the dream even though he is in it.

The dream is always the same.

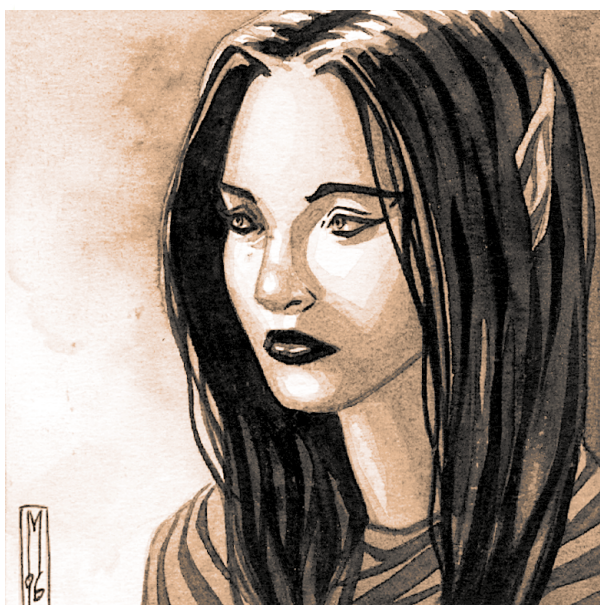
I see the king. He levels the bone castle with his sword and scrapes out his grave with a gauntleted hand. He then takes off his helm and gives me the sword, so I begin the cycle anew by cutting off his head. It skitters and rolls round and round the lip of the bowl until it winds its way in a bloody gyre to the very heart of the bed. His eyes open again, and then his mouth; from it the cool waters of the Dreaming pour forth, refilling the pool. The king's brother takes the sword from me and cuts the side of the pool. The waters flow out, and the desolate land greens.

Kingdom of Three Hills: Borders

Borders is populated by sidhe, satyr, nockers and boggans, with sidhe and boggans forming the largest portion.

Glynis, Queen of Three Hills

Glynis quietly took over the Borders while the fae warlords of the north battled over the riches of the cities. Although her



court is dominated by sidhe, Glynis has handed out freeholds to nobles and commoners equally. When the kingdom of Dew threatened to invade, the commoners rallied to her aid, and the late King Baird found that he was facing hundreds of tiny armies. Their determination prevented the war from beginning.

Her greatest secret is that she is in love with Ross. She sees this as a weakness, for she hates the idea of anyone having power over her, but she cannot help herself. Her spies report that Ross may be courting one of the countesses of Cymru and that angers her beyond belief. Should it be true, her jealous heart would be terrible indeed.

Glynis knows of a secret glade, within which are crevices filled with clay capable of making corp credha. Once fashioned to resemble her victims, the dolls give her three extra successes to any Art she chooses to cast upon the victim. By sacrificing a permanent point of Glamour, By inflicting damage upon the corp credha, she may also visit physical damage and even death upon her target. Her corp credha collection consists of dolls fashioned after all the rulers of Caledonia, and most of her nobles.

Court: Seelie

Legacies: Paladin/Riddler

House: Eiluned

Seeming: Wilder

Kith: Sidhe

Physical: Strength 3, Dexterity 4, Stamina 3

Social: Charisma 4, Manipulation 4, Appearance 4

Mental: Perception 3, Intelligence 3, Wits 4

Talents: Alertness 3, Athletics 1, Brawl 1, Diplomacy 4, Dodge 1, Empathy 1, Kenning 2, Subterfuge 3

Skills: Crafts 1, Etiquette 2, Falconry 1, Leadership 3, Melee 2, Ride 5, Survival 2, Temporal Sense 1

Knowledges: Area Knowledge (Three Hills) 4, Dream Lore 1, Enigmas 3, Heraldry 4, Lore (Seelie) 2, Mythlore 2, Politics 2

Arts: Chronos 3, Dream-Craft 2, Primal 3, Soothsay 1, Sovereign 5, Wayfare 2

Realms: Actor 2, Fae 5, Nature 3, Scene 1

Backgrounds: Gremayre 3, Political Connections 4, Resources 3, Retinue 5, Title 5, Treasures 5, Trod 5

Glamour: 6

Banality: 4

Willpower: 8

Treasures: Glynis' corp credha collection makes her a wily and dangerous enemy. Only she has access to the clay capable of making these dangerous items.

Image: Although impressive, Glynis' demeanor is not flamboyant. She left her human seeming behind years ago and does not speak of it. Glynis' bearing is icy and aloof at most times, but her laughter, often unexpected, is delightful. Her features are fine, and she is short for a fae. Her delicate, pale and coldly beautiful face is framed by her ebony tresses. Her clothing usually consists of layers of lace and silk, and she favors scarlet and purple.

Roleplaying Hints: Be cool and disdainful unless something truly amuses you; then let loose your joy. Never let anyone, not even your most-trusted retainers know your two secrets: Your love for Ross and the corp credha.

The highlands

Seumas, Chieftain of Clann Wrath

Don't chip the plates or break a glass in the Loch and Lin, or Seumas the grump boggan pub owner will have you slopping his hogs for a week. True of most of the clann chieftains, Seumas expects to be obeyed by his charges, and never backs down from a challenge. He and his clann stick together and he seems to have a preternatural (even for a fae) knack to know when someone is in trouble.

Seumas came to know his fae nature late in life; his time as a wilder was very short. He was delighted beyond reason to learn that the "fairy tales" he'd heard all his life were true, at least in part. Seumas' two young sons, Hugh and Rory, also are boggan. Together, they run the Loch and Lin along with a small pig-and-cattle farm. Family, both mortal and fae, are important to Seumas. Only an idiot would hurt one of Clann Wrath and not expect to be buried in dung, or worse.

Court: Seelie

Legacies: Saint/Beast

Seeming: Grump

Kith: Boggan

Physical: Strength 4, Dexterity 2, Stamina 3

Social: Charisma 2, Manipulation 3, Appearance 2

Mental: Perception 3, Intelligence 2, Wits 3

Talents: Alertness 2, Carousing 2, Dodge 1, Empathy 1, Intimidation 3, Streetwise 1

Skills: Animal Ken 3, Cooking 3, Drive 2, Fast Talk 2, First Aid 1, Melee 2, Survival 1

Knowledges: Law 1, Mythlore 2, Occult 1, Politics 1



Arts: Chicanery 1, Legerdemain 3, Primal 1, Wayfare 3
Realms: Actor 1, Fae 2, Prop 1, Scene 2
Backgrounds: Dreamers 1, Holdings 1, Political Connections 1, Resources 3
Glamour: 4
Banality: 4
Willpower: 6

Image: Seumas is short, balding and stout in both seemings. His hands seem more gnarled and his ears more prominent as a fae. He always wears heavy work pants, thick boots and a thick sweater, donning an apron in the bar or an overcoat outside.

Roleplaying Hints: You talk loudly and long, and if you have to yell to make yourself heard over the din of customers or grunting hogs (if there's a difference), so much the better. You act like the stereotypical stingy old man, but truth to tell, you'd give your last pound to someone in need.

The Brood of the Fachan

The Brood of the Fachan is a group of Redcaps that worships an Unseelie Chimera known as the Fachan, a fae of unquenchable, primal destructive energy. The Fachan is a cyclopean giant with one leg beneath its trunk and one arm centered in its chest. Initiation rites include maiming, as the members of the Brood attempt to re-create themselves in the Fachan's image.

Glenfhada Distillery

Busby is a wilder nocker from the Kingdom of Alba; he and his kinain wife, Anker, produce excellent scotch and happy children. The scotch is prized all over the Isle of the Mighty for its taste and enchanted nature. No one knows at what stage the product picks up its Glamour, but none deny its effects. By Anker's commandment, only the fae royalty endorses Glenfhada; it cannot be bought or sold, only given as a gift or traded.

Anker and Busby have produced three changelings: Dermot (a boggan), who is learning the business, Agatha (a satyr) who is her mother's pride and joy, and Colin (a salmon-Pooka) the newest member of the Loch Lads.

The Loch Lads

These pooka pranksters of legend are the Loch Ness monster (the real one was removed by the Verbenas decades ago). They meet irregularly to plan ever-more intricate ways to fool tourists and delight children. At each meeting, they propose a contest to see whose idea they will work on next. These contests include wrestling, watermelon seed spitting (when in season), spin the boggan (when in season) and fart lighting.

The Isles

The folk and fae of the Isles are even more independent — if less numerous — than those of the Highlands. Most of the people look to the Scandinavian countries for their heritage, rather than Celtic Scotland. The Northern Isles support the highest population of trolls, an after-effect of their Nordic heritage. Many sidhe from Alba and Dalriada dream of taming the thanes of these isles.

Asa and the Stoorworm

Asa is the jarl of the Shetlands. A wilder troll, she controls about 30 other trolls and assorted kith. While outwardly calm and secure, Asa is a whirl of doubt inside. As she has risen in power and responsibility so have her fears. They have now become embodied in a nightmare chimera, the Stoorworm. This huge water drake has harassed Inverness and the Orkney and Shetland Isles of late. Its appearance in these waters and in her dreams have only added to her fears, and so the Stoorworm grows.

Because of her imposing appearance and her seeming confidence, Asa inspires great loyalty among her retainers. She doesn't realize that most would die for her, if she asked them to do so. In mortal seeming as Asa Anderson, she works in a small fish processing plant, running forklifts and taking care of shipping. The pay is surprisingly good, and Asa has saved a lot of money. She would like to open her own small-freight service, but self-doubt over whether she could make a go at it undermines her initiative.

Court: Seelie

Legacies: Regent/Wretch

Seeming: Wilder

Kith: Troll

Physical: Strength 5, Dexterity 3, Stamina 4

Social: Charisma 4, Manipulation 2, Appearance 2

Mental: Perception 3, Intelligence 2, Wits 2

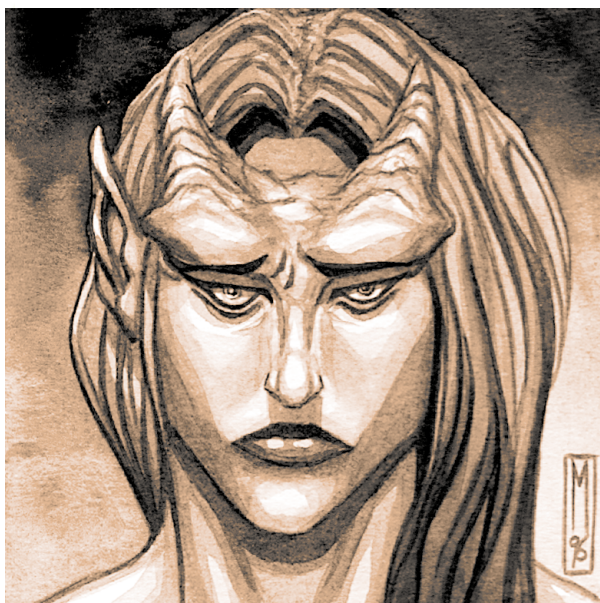
Talents: Alertness 2, Brawl 3, Dodge 1, Intimidation 1, Kenning 1, Search 2

Skills: Climbing 2, Drive 3, First Aid 1, Leadership 2, Mechanic 1, Melee 3, Survival 1

Knowledge: Heraldry 1, History 1, Lore (Troll) 2, Mythlore 1, Politics 2

Arts: Chicanery 1, Legerdemain 1, Primal 4, Wayfare 3

Realms: Actor 2, Fae 2, Nature 3



Backgrounds: Holdings 3, Political Connections 2, Resources 3, Title 3

Glamour: 5

Banality: 3

Willpower: 7

Image: Big-boned and muscular as a human, Asa towers over most every Kithain in Scotland when she's in her fae seeming. Her skin is pale blue. Her hair, lips and eyes are a shade darker. She wears oilskin work clothes at the factory, but trades these in for light leather armor and a fur-lined tunic when acting as jarl.

Roleplaying Hints: Be polite, attentive and cordial with your retainers. Never make a threat unless you mean to carry it through.

Mages

The Tradition mages have been slow to react to the favorable changes in Scottish society. The Traditions are just beginning to reach out to each other after many years of hatred and distrust. The mages associated with the Bardic College and the small Chantry of Choristers at Dryburgh Abbey are the most active at this time. The Verbena are still suspicious of the motives of the other Traditions. Should Scotland's mages unite and discover the growing schism in the Technocracy, then the balance of power would change very quickly.

The Traditions

While mages from many Traditions live in Scotland, the Celestial Chorus and the Verbena are the most powerful factions. The Verbena's distrust of the Celestial Chorus still tinges on hatred, since Celestial Choristers within the Kirk once sided with the Order of Reason and exposed many of the Awakened during the Reformation. This still prevents the two Traditions from effectively working together.

The Celestial Chorus has plenty of influence in the Church of Scotland, and thereby has many governmental and educational

ties as well. The Chorus, through its governmental and educational arms, now sponsors many Gaelic educational programs, perhaps in an attempt to make up for the sins of the past.

Verbena influences remain strong in Scotland with the growth of folk musicians and neo-pagan and New-Age movements. They find custos and even Awakened brothers and sisters within these groups. Verbena strive to maintain the mythic threads so common in Scottish culture; at the same time, they must weed out the "fake" mysticism that the Syndicate proffers, such as computerized Tarot decks and psychic telephone networks.

Technocratic Paradigms

James Watt (steam engines), Thomas Telford (Caledonian Canal), Adam Smith (economist) and Hume (Empirical philosopher) may not have been Technomancers. However, they contributed much to the rise of the Technocratic paradigm in Scotland. The Highland Clearances, with the help of the Kirk, marked the greatest manipulation by the Technocracy. The growing industrial centers of Glasgow, Edinburgh and Dundee swelled with Scottish farmers evicted from their lands, creating huge estates for Sleeper and Technocratic industrialists and helping bring about the decline of Scots Gaelic and the Celtic culture at large.

Iteration X traditionally dominated the Technocracy's activities in Scotland until the 1970s; Its founders, the Artificers, moved in with the Victorian industrialists. While the Iterators were able to keep the heavy industries of Scotland profitable, they lost most of their funding. Even though it contributed to the opening of the Murchison and related oil fields in the North Sea, Iteration X occupies a much smaller part of the Technocracy's efforts. The Syndicate successfully took the heart out of Gaelic culture in the past, but it has not been able to stamp it out completely. In fact, during the past few decades, the resurgence of interest in Celtic culture has weakened its hold on reality in Scotland.

The NWO used its colleagues' failures to gain more control of Iteration X and the Syndicate's plans in recent years. Under Percival Rand, the NWO funded a Construct of Progenitor FACADE Engineers and placed them in control of one of the secret drilling operations in the North Sea. Its goal: to create humanoids capable of enduring the icy conditions of the waters. Its seal-human fusions have met with limited success. Iteration X must now compete with the Progenitors for funding. Its fate rests with its ability to get its automated drilling rigs operational without engendering a reality backlash.

Recent innovations of the NWO include the "TV police" of Glasgow, persons who sit in close-circuit monitoring stations to report suspicious activities to the police. The NWO was also responsible for many of the Celtic "preservation" projects, which succeeded in fencing in and monitoring many magickal sites. Many standing stones are nothing more than clever copies; the originals are in the hands of the Technocracy.

The Syndicate has begun funding the research of a promising new Sleeper, Dr. Calum Erskine. His anti-mythological studies may be the Syndicate's best hope for dispelling the Masses' belief in the supernatural.

Unknown to the Scottish Technocrats, their chief officer, Percival Rand, is a member of the Harbingers of Avalon. The

To: Sir Mortimer Evans
From: Percival Rand
Re: Project Longshanks

I hope you and Lady Victoria Holmes have a smashing time at Ascot. I, unfortunately, am imprisoned behind Hadrian's Wall. If I could but lower myself to golf, perhaps I could find a moment's diversion.

I can console myself with a job well-done. Like a good Scottish flock, the Constructs have been duly fleeced of their funds and our coffers are full. Now all that remains is the slaughter.

Scots' similes aside, the Progenitors and our good little machines of Iteration X are busy trying to please me as best they can, as if that is possible. The Progenitors are building workers while Iteration X is attempting to create oil drilling platforms that operate at 95% efficiency. Our agents in both operations will make sure they never succeed. This will tie up the long enough for you to put our plans in motion.

The next time you are in Burberrys', please purchase a mackintosh for me and send it post-haste; weather here is rather thick. One Reality, one World, one Britannia.

other Technocrats are being duped to chase each other's tails while their coffers are raided. He and his fellows plan to re-establish the world-wide preeminence of Britain.

The Auld Covenant

The Auld Covenant of mages has been in existence for nearly 600 years (see Chapter Five). Although this cabal maintains a sizable Horizon Realm, called the Red Donjon, the mages spend most of their time in and around Edinburgh. The entire chantry house acts as a sanctuary and has a sizable Arcane of its own (see the Backgrounds of the same name in *Mage* and *The Book of Shadows*).

The cabal is made up of Euthanatos and Hermetics. Their membership is exclusive, and while not above helping a Tradition mage in need, it hasn't accepted any new members in over 120 years. The mages prefer to seek out likely candidates and train them privately, allowing such provisional members only limited access to the chantry's resources.

The current Euthanatos master is Natalie Moncreiffe, and the Hermetic master is Archibald Boyd. The two work well together, although Archibald rarely wishes to leave his work in the Red Donjon.



His students include Leslie DeLillio and Francois Jardine. Natalie's charges include: Margot Stair, Evan Gregor and Jacob Urquhart.

The group's motivations and plans remain a secret, but the Technocracy's inability to put down roots in Edinburgh speaks for both the covenant's goals and its power.

Michael Scot

Essence: Primordial

Nature: Architect

Demeanor: Conformist

Tradition: Order of Hermes

Attributes: Strength 2, Dexterity 3, Stamina 3, Charisma 3, Manipulation 4, Appearance 3, Perception 4, Intelligence 5, Wits 4

Abilities: Alertness 4, Astrology 2, Awareness 5, Chantry Politics 4, Cosmology 3, Diplomacy 4, Enigmas 4, Etiquette 2, Firearms 1, High Ritual 5, History 3, Instruction 3, Intuition 4, Investigation 4, Law 2, Leadership 4, Linguistics 4, Lore (Tradition) 4, Lore (Technocracy) 2, Meditation 4, Occult 3, Research 5, Sense Deception 1, Speed Reading 3,

Backgrounds: Arcane 7, Avatar 4, Destiny 3, Library 3, Resources 5, Sanctum 3

Spheres: Correspondence 3, Entropy 4, Forces 5, Life 2, Matter 2, Mind 1, Prime 5, Spirit 6, Time 3

Arete: 7

Willpower: 9

Quintessence: 8

Paradox: 3

Background: Michael Scot's disappearance was due to a huge paradox backlash caused when he tried to permanently sever the ties between an unknown Nephandi and Lord Soulis' body. He nearly went insane out of loneliness, but found that his curse also gave him unbounded freedom. He helped his old chantry route the Technocracy's attempts to set up shop in his beloved Edinburgh, and he got a lot of studying done. Eventually he became an archmage and now spends most of his time in the Deep Umbra, although he has set up wards around Scotland and the chantry to alert him to dangers. He has only come back once. The poor Qui La Machinae, it didn't last long where Michael Scot sent it.

According to the Auld Covenant, Scot is still its master. His room in the chantry is still maintained. When the elders of the cabal meet, the reserve three chairs: one for the Master of the Euthanatos, one for the Master Hermetic and the last for Michael Scot.

Image: Michael Scot hasn't been seen for several hundred years as a result of his terribly high Arcane rating, and his numerous jaunts into the Deep Umbra. When last he looked in the mirror he was dressed in long green and black velvet robes. He has a round face, sparse, gray hair and extremely bushy eyebrows. Michael Scot needs three successes on a Willpower roll, difficulty 8, to make himself be noticed. If one of these successes is not a "10" his words will eventually be forgotten.

Roleplaying Hints: Let's face it, you have got better things to do than chat with unperceptive upstart mages, unless something bad is brewing in the Umbra.

Quote: "Okay lads and lassies, I'm tired of repeating myself. Concentrate this time, or I'll have Thor come and spank your not-very-wee behinds!"

The Singers of Dryburgh Abbey

The two dominant personalities of the Dryburgh Abbey gift shop are Sister Isobel and Faruq ibn Kamal. These two make an interesting partnership. Sister Isobel quietly leads from the back, urging Sister Penelope and Sister Marguerite to follow Faruq, from a discreet distance of course.

Sister Isobel

Essence: Pattern

Nature: Martyr

Demeanor: Caregiver

Tradition: Celestial Chorus



Attributes: Strength 1, Dexterity 2, Stamina 3, Charisma 3, Manipulation 4, Appearance 3, Perception 4, Intelligence 3, Wits 2

Abilities: Alertness 2, Cosmology 2, Diplomacy 2, Drive 1, Enigmas 2, Etiquette 2, First Aid 2, High Ritual 4, History 1, Instruction 3, Intrigue 2, Leadership 1, Linguistics 2, Meditation 1, Research 2, Singing 2

Backgrounds: Arcane 1, Avatar 4, Dream 1, Influence 2, Resources 1

Spheres: Forces 1, Life 2, Mind 1, Prime 5, Spirit 3

Arete: 5

Willpower: 8

Quintessence: 8

Paradox: 2

Background: Isobel Ponthieu took her veil and vows at age 14, the same year the Song Awoke within her. She worked for some years near Chartres, France, before moving to Scotland. She has made the rugged country her new home and takes pleasure in the fact that the small chantry she leads is thriving. Now, she is somewhat elderly and frail. Though she would never admit it, Sister Isobel has found that Faruq ibn Kamal's youth and exuberance provides fuel for her own faith.

The Sister's Avatar is a source of sadness, for it takes the form of her twin sister Irene, who died of pneumonia when the girls were nine. Isobel worries that this may mean Irene is enduring some sort of purgatory, with herself as the judge.

Image: Perhaps some nuns wear modern garb, but not Isobel. Her wimple is always perfectly white and starched, and her charcoal-gray dress is never less than three inches below her knees. The sister does smile, though, and secretly enjoys dry, British humor

Roleplaying Hints: Your solemnity hides a mirthful soul. Nothing is more important than your quest for God, but that doesn't mean you must always be dour. You run your life by the Golden Rule every day. Your faith is strong.

Quote: "Do you always yell so loudly when you pray, Mr. Kamal? Not that the Lord minds, of course; I'm just thinking of the neighbors, you see."

Faruq ibn Kamal

Essence: Dynamic

Nature: Visionary

Demeanor: Jester

Tradition: Celestial Chorus

Attributes: Strength 3, Dexterity 4, Stamina 3, Charisma 3, Manipulation 2, Appearance 4, Perception 2, Intelligence 3, Wits 2

Abilities: Alertness 2, Astrology 3, Awareness 3, Brawl 4, Carousing 3, Diplomacy 2, Etiquette 3, Fast-Talk 2, High Ritual 2, Intuition 2, Singing 4, Occult 3

Backgrounds: Avatar 3, Dream 2

Spheres: Mind 4, Prime 3



Arete: 4
Willpower: 5
Quintessence: 4
Paradox: 0

Background: Faruq was born in Jordan in the middle of a marketplace and grew up among black marketeers and scoundrels. He never knew his mother, and the vagabonds who raised him told him that his father was an Englishman. He was discovered by a mhadi when he tried to sell the holy man some American pornography. He joined the Chorus of Allah in the mosque and was sent by it as an ambassador to the Vatican.

While at the Vatican, he ran across a picture of his Avatar — a faerie. Using the huge library at his disposal, he became a student of British history and lore. When he heard of the mission in Scotland, he jumped at the chance.

Image: It's cold in Scotland! Faruq's milk-chocolate skin is usually swaddled in sweaters, coats, mittens and gloves.

Roleplaying Hints: You are the used-car salesman of the soul. Ignore insults, press forward, and smile until they relent.

Quote: "Aaah, but the postcard book of the abbey is a much better bargain than a single postcard!"

The Wives of the Wood

This coven consists of four other Verbena besides Eilidh. The group maintains tight control over visitors to its wood. Although most of their efforts are dedicated to protecting the Dark Tree, the mages also make pilgrimages to locals who still cling to the old ways, and even journey to cities like Edinburgh to participate in festivals.

Eilidh

Essence: Questing

Nature: Director

Demeanor: Judge

Tradition: Verbena

Attributes: Strength 2, Dexterity 4, Stamina 3, Charisma 3, Manipulation 4, Appearance 3, Perception 3, Intelligence 3, Wits 2

Abilities: Alertness 2, Cosmology 2, Crafts 3, Dancing 2, Enigmas 4, Expression 1, Herbalism 3, High Ritual 4, Intuition 3

Backgrounds: Arcane 2, Avatar 4

Spheres: Entropy 3, Life 5, Prime 3, Spirit 2

Arete: 5

Willpower: 9

Quintessence: 8

Paradox: 6

Background: When Eilidh's daughter Uninnseann refused to take her place at the head of the coven, Eilidh's leadership became less vigorous. She now spends much of her time with the Dark Tree. Una, one of the Adepts, has taken over much of the day-to-day operations of the coven. Even though Una has shown her potential, Eilidh refuses to appoint her as heir.

Eilidh's Avatar is a golden eagle. It used to perch on the branches of the Dark Tree and speak to her, but ever since her argument with her daughter it just stares at her. Now Eilidh seems locked in a battle of wills with it. Eilidh can no longer match its glaze, but she has not relented.

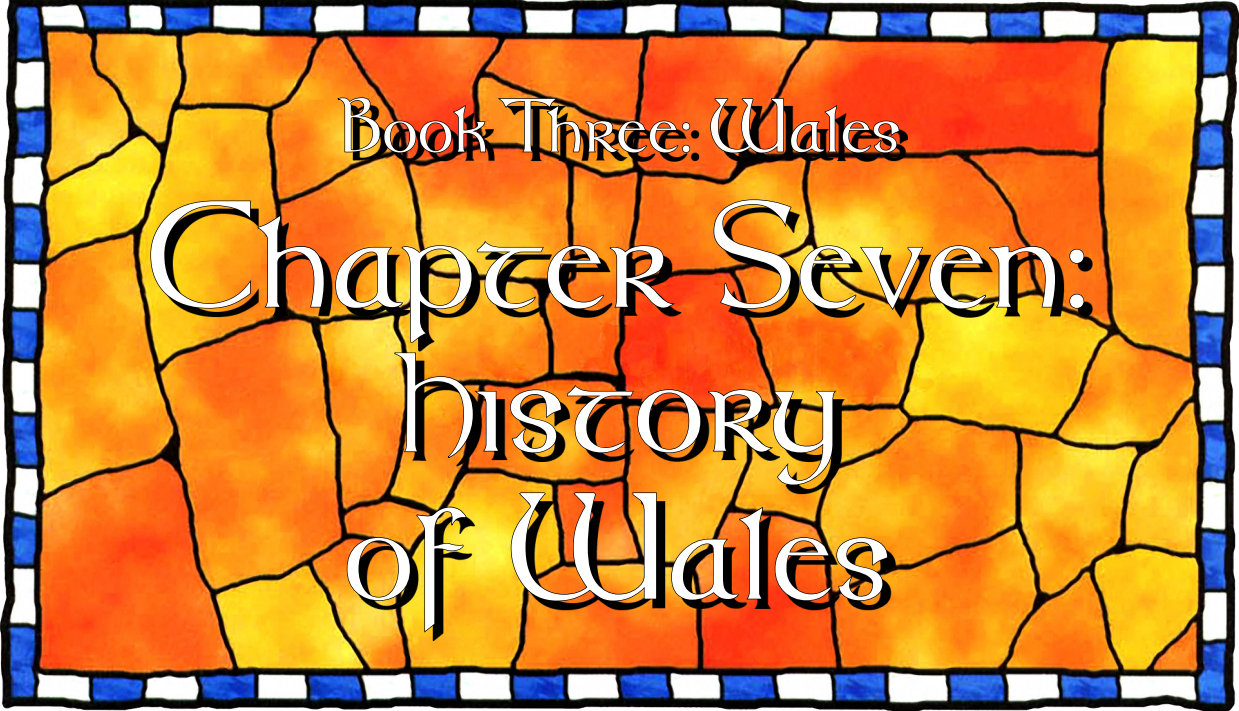
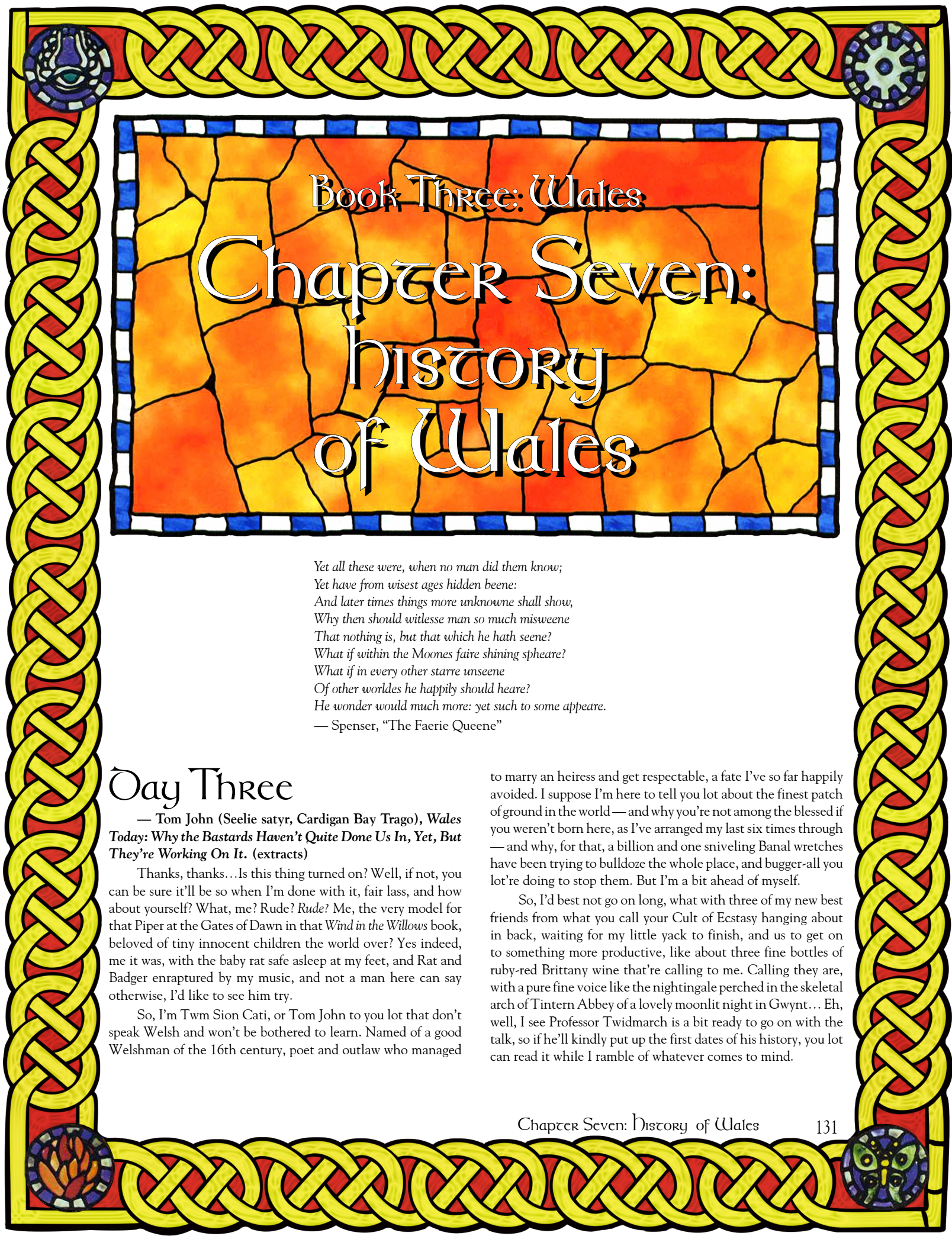
Image: Eilidh stands a little over five feet tall and has a thick mane of gray hair. She has a hawklike nose and her piercing eyes give her a predatory stare.

Roleplaying Hints: No one seems to listen to your commandments any more. In fact, you have begun to wonder if they are all laughing at you.

Quote: "If Una can't handle your problem, I will."







Book Three: Wales

Chapter Seven: History of Wales

*Yet all these were, when no man did them know;
Yet have from wisest ages hidden beene:
And later times things more unknowne shall show,
Why then should witlesse man so much misweene
That nothing is, but that which he hath seene?
What if within the Moones faire shining spheare?
What if in every other starre unseene
Of other worldes he happily should heare?
He wonder would much more: yet such to some appeare.*

— Spenser, “The Faerie Queene”

Day Three

— Tom John (Seelie satyr, Cardigan Bay Trago), *Wales Today: Why the Bastards Haven’t Quite Done Us In, Yet, But They’re Working On It.* (extracts)

Thanks, thanks...Is this thing turned on? Well, if not, you can be sure it’ll be so when I’m done with it, fair lass, and how about yourself? What, me? Rude? *Rude*? Me, the very model for that Piper at the Gates of Dawn in that *Wind in the Willows* book, beloved of tiny innocent children the world over? Yes indeed, me it was, with the baby rat safe asleep at my feet, and Rat and Badger enraptured by my music, and not a man here can say otherwise, I’d like to see him try.

So, I’m Twm Sion Cati, or Tom John to you lot that don’t speak Welsh and won’t be bothered to learn. Named of a good Welshman of the 16th century, poet and outlaw who managed

to marry an heiress and get respectable, a fate I’ve so far happily avoided. I suppose I’m here to tell you lot about the finest patch of ground in the world — and why you’re not among the blessed if you weren’t born here, as I’ve arranged my last six times through — and why, for that, a billion and one sniveling Banal wretches have been trying to bulldoze the whole place, and bugger-all you lot’re doing to stop them. But I’m a bit ahead of myself.

So, I’d best not go on long, what with three of my new best friends from what you call your Cult of Ecstasy hanging about in back, waiting for my little yack to finish, and us to get on to something more productive, like about three fine bottles of ruby-red Brittany wine that’re calling to me. Calling they are, with a pure fine voice like the nightingale perched in the skeletal arch of Tintern Abbey of a lovely moonlit night in Gwynt... Eh, well, I see Professor Twidmarch is a bit ready to go on with the talk, so if he’ll kindly put up the first dates of his history, you lot can read it while I ramble of whatever comes to mind.

B.C.

- ? Tuatha de Danaan, Wyck appear in Wales.
- 1000? Gwynedd (northernmost principality in Wales) becomes stronghold of Druidism (some of which were Wyck) and other mystical traditions. Remains so even during Roman and Norman invasions because of the difficult terrain and the fierce independence of its people.
- 92 Caer Bala enchanted and submerged under what is now Bala Lake.

Ah, Caer Bala, that one my grandsir used to talk about! Now you must know first that Bala Lake is the largest natural lake in my homeland, just southeast of Snowdonia. Lovely it is, shining in the afternoon sun just as blue as this sweet young childling's eyes. Yet in the old times it was no lake, look you, but a thriving town with a wealthy prince, Burne the Mean. Miserly and rotten he was, having made his gold from the work of the subjects he exploited, nor did he ever part with a coin of it. And under his rule, the people themselves grew so crass and greedy as Burne himself.

Each year at Samhain, when the walls between the worlds grow thin, Prince Burne called all his people to his palace for a festival — though a meaner and less festive festival could no bard imagine. And while the folk took what pleasure they could take from stale bread and mean-hearted games, a little black sow with a ringed tail crept into the throne room. And it looked at Burne the Mean and said, "Vengeance shall come."

Burne, he looked the sow in its dead black eyes and said, "Who are you, talking pig?" And the sow said, "I am the woman you used most cruelly, a year ago this night. Vengeance shall come." Burne, he shouted in his fear, "It will not come if I visit it on you first!" And with that he struck at the pig with a club — but as he hit, the sow leaped and tore out his throat. Then the pig cried, "Vengeance has come!" It turned to dust, it did, covering Burne as he lay still as a stone on the floor.

What, child? What was the pig? Well, one of the living dead, the vampires, it might have been. Or a wraithly dead soul risen once more to bring its vengeance to the world. Not a word have I heard of why it sought revenge on Burne. But all this matters less than what came after.

So Burne died without wife or heir, and at once did the folk of Caer Bala give thought to his gold and who would get it. None knew where he had it hid, look you, but somehow they got the idea it was under his rich palace. Hardly had the undertaker put the pennies on Burne's eyes, when they set about tearing down the place.

They tore all the palace down, almost around their own fool heads. And in the foundation they found a copper plaque, and on it they read: Who disturbs the roots of my house shall drown in gold. Well, think if you can of an inscription more likely to make them pull up the plaque, eh? They tore out this copper plate by the roots, and from below flooded out a torrent of water, as if a plug were pulled!

The people did not die, for a magic pool it was, or so my grandsir did tell me. Might it have been a sarn (trod) to the deep blue seas of the Dreaming, and Burne the Mean its guard? Be that as it might, the waters turned these greedy folk of Caer

Bala into fish, a lovely kind of fish called a gwyniad, which you may see there yet. And in the setting sun their scales gleam gold.

Now my grandsir, a fine old man from just over the border in Shropshire, did say that a hundred years ago a couple of men met a talking fish in Bala Lake. This is how he told it:

"Look you, I could not say just exactly what it was like — I was not there, you know — but it was a gwyniad like you see in the lake. Its voice was so sweet and musical as a trilling nightingale, a lady's voice, that these fellows felt drawn to her there and then, the both of them. And she told them as how her folk kept a treasure at the bottom of the lake, great glittering lumps of gold, and dear knows what. And she would give them all as much as ever they liked, if only they would come to her in the water and take it out of her mouth.

"So in they waded — nearly up their chests — and she ducked down and brought up a lump of gold, very near as big as her head. And the chaps were just a-going to take it off her, but then the one of them noticed her sharp teeth, not fish sort of teeth, and so he hung back and made for shore. And the other, he reached for the gold, and the fish, my word! She bit him a good hard one on the wrist.

"He slipped under the water with the gold, and the fish ducked down. In a moment a lovely dark-haired woman with blazing green eyes came up out of the water and onto shore, with not a stitch on her. She ran past without a look and ducked into the trees. They never saw more of the other man again, nor did they get any of the gold, nor has anybody ever seen the woman since."

Oh, yes, Bala Lake has many a legend around it. At night, they say, you can get out on the lake and hear a temple bell ringing far below. And there swims a fish who carries a sword belted to its body, an iron sword given to it by a hero of old; and no one can catch this fish but that it cuts itself free with the sword, and it will give up the treasure only to the hero himself. And then there's the tale — ah, but I see the good professor is waiting, and so I'll leave off for a bit.

Cymru was once a rugged land, look you, and still is in the minds of its people. And in those minds it is, that the land remains strong and vital. I tell you this: The Dreaming is yet strong in Wales!

A.D.

- 19 Mighty half-sidhe, half-magus Glamorgan drives giants from Glamorgan with "shining sword." Giants retreat into Cambrian Mountains. Glamorgan builds Cardiff Keep.
- 75 Romans occupy Cardiff, build a fort. Glamorgan and his court flee the Roman Banality to Brecon Beacons area, where they build Caer Caernyffon on the glacial lake Llyn y Fan Fach.
- 140-143 Gwynedd remains the stronghold of Druidism and other traditions while Romans invade area.
- 150+ Pictish shamans battle Celts; some on each side lock many enemies deep underground, where some may still remain.
- 330 Sacred Congregation members and Sons of Mitras (early Celestial Choristers) move into Wales.
- 400-500s The Dream Realm, Camelot, begins to take shape.



For the proof, I give you Camelot. There are not many who remember that the legend of King Arthur rose first in Cymru, in the incomparable tale of Culhwch and Olwen — which is too long to tell here, so the professor need not worry. What I say is, the tales of Arthur spring from this land of Wales, no matter the Dark Age versions you hear now, the propaganda made up by the Technocracy.

The real legends, the true heart of Camelot, have grown large in the Dreaming. All the visions of Arthur's myth exist there together, and all are right. The people of the stories do live there, as you and I here — but in their many aspects, and we who reach them see only one aspect at a time, as you may see only one glittering of the many facets of a diamond.

In the Dreaming, lives Vortigern, who usurped the throne of Britain from its rightful heirs, Aurelius Ambrosius and Uther Pendragon, so that the Saxons overran the country. There, too, lives Merlin in all his variations, Merlin who foresaw Vortigern's death, Arthur's birth and coronation, and the rise of Camelot and the Round Table — who created three magickal pools in Britain, such as the Brianne in Wales. With these pools, Arthur conquered and united all Britain.

Lancelot and Guinevere live in that dream realm, too, in all the stages of their doomed love — as do Gawain and Perceval, Bors and Ector, and all the knights of the Round Table. And across that hazy and multiplying land of Camelot are hid the 13 Treasures of Britain, which Merlin took there for safekeeping.

But nowhere in all that land will you find an Arthur, save only a mere shadow — a placeholder, if you will. You see only a silhouette, hear only a kind of dream-voice, an idea. And all the rest kneel to this shape, seeing Arthur in their mind's eye — a dream's dream. Where is the real

- 410 Romans withdraw from Britain; rise of Welsh tribes in Gwynedd.
- 461 Emrys, a magus, appears at Caer Caernyffon to prophesy Glamorgan's fall, and is ejected. Months later, a black boar fatally gores Glamorgan. Unrest ("the Kniving Times") follows among Cymrian fae, 462-540.
- 500-15 A few Welsh tribes choose kings and queens; some are secretly mages or fae. Seelie and Unseelie courts control remote parts of Wales; fae principalities established outside major human cities and towns:
Gwynedd — Myrddin (not Merlin)
Glamorgan (& Kingdom of Wool) — Caerna Powis — Taliesin of Rheged
Dyfed — divided between Caerna and Taliesin
- 520 Myrddin entrusts Gwynedd and Pool of Brianne to Caerna for safekeeping, then disappears in 522.
- 527 War of the Black Torc, fought primarily in Kingdom of Wool (England).

Arthur, if ever there was a real Arthur? It may be the once and future king will not return, no, not until all three of the pools of magick are restored — and of the three, one is dry, and one lost.

When the Romans retreat from Wales and Glamorgan dies, we begin the history not just of Wales, but of the Welsh, and of the Cymrian fae — them we call the *Tylwyth Teg*, the fair family. A sad history it is, for both mortal and fae. Yet I recall its great glories as well, Camelot and Caledfwlch and Gwaelod, all lost now like scattered sands upon a beach. *Hiraeth*, we call that mood: nostalgia and longing. Listen, you Kithain and mages, and you too will know *hiraeth*.

They were great rulers in those times, many of them: Taliesin, who came of Urien's court in Rheged, ruled Powys — or "Powis," as they spelt it then. Taliesin wove a great freehold from a single strand of his blond hair, they say; his name means "shining brow," you know. Then Queen Caerna of the Borderlands, she was said to be a direct descendant of the Tuatha de Danaan themselves, the first settlers of this land before the humans came. Caerna ruled what they called then the Kingdom of Wool in England, later to be called the Kingdom of Smoke; and in Wales, where we fae have principalities rather than kingdoms, she started with Glamorgan, and shared Dyfed with Taliesin, to whom she was most kindly disposed.

Sam Haine did talk, in his English lecture, about the wizard Myrddin, and he was not sure whether this was Merlin. I see Professor Twidmarch has registered his own opinion on his timeline.

Myrddin, whoever he might have been, was indeed a great magus, but a touch of Kithain blood was in him, I think. He must have had, for slim was the chance that any mortal otherwise could rule a principality! But Myrddin had discovered Llyn Brianne, the Pool of Brianne — one of the three magical pools I did speak of — found (at that time) in the good soil deep within a cavern by the Swallow Falls of the River Llugwy. With its magic, he might have ruled the mortals of Wales. But instead he used it to establish a wondrous secret freehold in Gwynedd.

Yet Myrddin had not much interest in ruling Gwynedd, for soon he felt Banality threaten, or whatever it is that threatened mages then. He gave over the precious Llyn Brianne and his whole principality to Caerna — who was none too sorry to take either, I will guess. She asked him why he gave them over, and where he would go, but he said not a word.

Then Myrddin packed a fortnight's worth of food, a hot coal and a lodestone. He rode on a pale horse to the ruins of Segontium, a Roman fort on the coast near what is now Caernarfon. And then, it is said, Myrddin rode on his horse straight into the sea. The surf rose for a day and a night, and then the sea went calm. Not a bit of Myrddin did anyone see for many centuries, and even that later sighting lacks a bit of the complete honest truth, if you want my opinion. But I shall get to that in time.

(By the by, a bad area did that beach become from then on, at least as some say. Wales fell to English rule there on that same beach in 1283, when Edward I's army slew the last native Welsh prince, Llywelyn ap Gruffydd. Edward built Caernarfon by way of driving home his victory, and an ugly and Banal place it is;

537 Battle of Camlan: In one version of Dream Realm Camelot, Arthur and Mordred fight and perish during this battle. Arthur possibly spirited away to Avalon (Afallach), or, in some versions, to Glastonbury (England) or Carnedd Arthur (Snowdonia).

550 St. David's monastic settlement built. Unseelie slowly withdraw as Church strengthens in Dyfed. Many move into Glamorgan to serve Morgan le Fay.

Late 500s St. David converts Wales to Christianity.

602-653 Many fae rulers enter seclusion (or Arcadia) as Christian influence grows and cities fill. Morgan le Fay retreats forever to Horizon Realm of Avalon in 652. Unseelie Prince Carniog takes Glamorgan throne.

and to humiliate the Welsh, he declared his eldest son "Prince of Wales," as all the English kings have done since. But take heart, do not worry that I shall start frothing like that Scottish nocker yesterday!)

Sam Haine also spoke of the War of the Black Torc. By way of reminder for those not present then, the Torc appeared in Albion Pool in Wessex. The year 527, this was. Unseelie Prince Carniog of Lyonesse gained the torc by chance; then Carniog and Morgan le Fay used it to enslave many Seelie fae, confining them to Carniog's undersea court for centuries. Worst, Morgan le Fay did foully deceive Prince Rhys of Glamorgan, who was son to Queen Caerna. She entrapped him, and Prince Carniog confined him in the Black Torc itself.

Queen Caerna went to war to rescue Rhys. She failed, and lost Glamorgan to Morgan le Fay. As Morgan walked into the principality freehold in 527, in the same instant it happened that in Gwynedd freehold, many miles away, the Brianne pool vanished, and none found it for many a year.

Morgan le Fay has probably as many aspects to her as do Arthur and Merlin and the rest. Much of her role in the history of our kind is rumor and anecdote, for she took many witnesses with her to Avalon and slew most of the rest. A cruel woman she was, as I heard it, and virulently opposed to Christianity. Now you all know, as I know, that the worship of Christ does not, in itself, equal Banality. But in that time, among those early missionaries, it must have done as they tried to quash the old ways, for the fae retreated as the Church advanced.

Oh, I know many of the tales — Morgan sealing compacts with the Devil, Morgan inspiring the redcap who became the first vampire (hah!), Morgan warping reality to suit her madness — so many versions there are, I cannot think that anyone knows them all. But whatever the truth of Morgan's nature, I know the truth of her departure.

In her freehold's great throne room she called together all her court, the highest to the lowest. And there also she invited Prince Carniog, from his dark court off the coast in sunken Lyonesse — her close ally, and yet the tales tell of deep disdain between them, each for the other.



Morgan took a silk purse from her sash, and with a flick of her wrist she cast it open. It grew to the size of the room, and she ordered all her servants and courtiers to walk into it. They dared not refuse. When they entered, she popped the purse closed, shrank it to hang on her sash, and told Carniog, "This realm is yours, to hold or lose."

And she gave him a long sword of shining silver. "This be the Sword of Glamorgan, who did conquer this realm six centuries ago. Mark well these words: The sword be invincible within Cymru; but should ye set foot beyond the country's borders, the sword shall turn on thee, and disaster shall surely follow."

Then Morgan made to him a terse farewell, opened a path to the gates of Avalon, and departed. Prince Carniog went no more to his court in Lyonesse, and I know no tale that tells what came of his absence there. But many are the stories of his vile attacks on his Seelie neighbors in Powis and Dyfed, and of his worrying fear over the growing power of Powis.

It is not much that I've said so far about Carniog himself, but I will tell you of him before long — for of his long, troubling, evil reign in Glamorgan I have heard much.

The Pool Brianne has moved from place to place over the centuries, and often vanished for long years. Those who find it are marked by destiny, for always there is a tale in the finding. Although, as I think on it, if some poor fool found the pool and did nothing with it, no one would hear of him, and a thin tale that would be, eh?

Be that as it might, this particular finding of the pool now, in 888, that is quite a tale, grand and sad at once. The mortal wizard Abernaeron had befriended a stand of the ghille dhu, the green men. They led him to the pool, which at that time lay halfway up beautiful, icy Mount Snowdon. The wizard sensed the pool's power at once, but more goodness he had than ambition. Rather than use its power for selfish ends, he brought the news to the Powis freehold of Prince Taliesin, whom Abernaeron had talked with at times before.

- 654-954 Glamorgan under Carniog becomes haunted, near deserted.
- 730-821 King Offa builds dike along Mercia-Wales border.
- 879+ Germanic shamans (proto-Verbena) settle in Wales throughout Dark Ages. Early Hermetics come seeking solitude or esoteric knowledge.
- 888 Hermetic magus Abernaeron bani Ex Miscellanea rediscovers Pool of Brianne in remote Snowdonia. Taliesin, ailing Prince of Powis, assigns fae and ghille dhu protectors to Brianne.
- 891 Taliesin dies. His daughter, Rhonwen, becomes Princess of Powis. Rhonwen and Abernaeron marry, build Caer Caledfwlch. First Festival of Talecraft.
- 940s Height of Caledfwlch influence. Preparations for war against Carniog in Glamorgan.
- 950 Avalanche destroys Pool of Brianne and guardians.
- 951 Deaths of Rhonwen and Abernaeron. Caer Caledfwlch falls to Carniog.



Now not long before, Prince Carniog had sent a sluagh assassin to strike Taliesin with a slow fae poison. The courtiers at Powis caught the assassin and turned her into a slug, too late to save Taliesin. His end lay clear before him. The great man could have used the magic of Brianne to save himself, perhaps, but he wished that its power should serve his kingdom, not himself. So he appointed the ghille dhu official stewards of the pool, and a worthy task he set Abernaeron: how best to use Brianne's magick. And while the wizard studied and thought and planned, Taliesin withered away.

He had a daughter, the prince did, a fair maiden with golden hair and fine gray eyes, no less beautiful than this glorious damsel I see here in the third row — care to join me and my Ecstatic friends after the talk, dear? Well, you think about it for now. Where was I? Ah, Rhonwen.

Rhonwen had the beauty of the fair folk and the vigor of her human father. She and Abernaeron fell in love at first sight, as the tale would have it, and Taliesin blessed their union with almost his last breath. Upon their marriage, the two conceived a great and wondrous working, the building of a new freehold near the Pool Brianne. In a single night under the full moon they built atop Mount Snowdon *Caer Caledfwlch*, a glorious castle and shining summer city surrounded by snow.

Caledfwlch became the cultural center for all the Kithain of Cymru. Of the poetry and songs of its bards, and the wonders of everyday life there, I need say nothing, for you have all heard those

songs and marveled at the tales of those wonders. My sad task it is to tell of *Caledfwlch's* fall, and of the demise of the lovers who built it.

Caledfwlch and Queen Caerna's domains were always the checks upon Prince Carniog's ambition. Around his thin neck Carniog wore the Black Torc, which enslaved its victims, and at his waist he wore always the sword of Glamorgan, which protected him from harm so long as he never left Cymru. But he could not be everywhere at once, and he lacked enough troops to hold the lands he took; for all the fair family despised Carniog.

No greater scoundrel ever rose from the deep ocean that covers *Lyonesse*, that strange, darkly beautiful realm. Carniog was handsome and lithe, but arrogant beyond belief, and thought of all surface folk as mere livestock. He bred them into monstrous forms, for purposes none know even now. Many in Glamorgan fled the land when he took it. So he ruled as a turtle, behind high walls and deep trenches, and he schemed endlessly to conquer his hated rivals by treachery.

The other principalities became more worried by the year as Carniog's schemes grew ever bolder. In *Caledfwlch*, Abernaeron and Rhonwen spent much time kenning his defenses and drilling their armies. Yet we Seelie in Cymru have always been honorable folk, and to declare war without overt cause sat well with nobody. So *Caledfwlch* hoped for peace — but prepared for war.

At last, when the tercentenary of Carniog's rule in Glamorgan was only a few years off, the chief of Mount Snowdon's snow giants arrived in the *Caledfwlch* court. These giants were a

foul, greedy, thick-headed lot, never friendly to the fair folk, and none at Caledfwlch trusted them. But strength the giants had, colossal strength beyond any troll of today, and so none dared ignore them. I am glad they are gone, these days.

This giant chief, Mog was his name, told Rhonwen, “I have learned from kinfolk in Glamorgan that Carniog plans to invade Powis. We fear the Shining Sword of Glamorgan, which killed many of our kind long ago. We shall help you defend your freehold.” It seemed a harmless offer on its face, and the giants did not ask to be let in the freehold; and so Rhonwen and Abernaeron accepted Mog’s offer.

The giants began heaping great ice boulders in a huge pile on the slope of Mount Snowdon. “Ammunition,” they said, and the rulers did not doubt it, for the snow giants did often throw such boulders as weapons. Then one cold night Mog and his treacherous tribe, who had been in Carniog’s pay all along, let loose the boulders in a roaring big avalanche. This killed the guardians of the Brianne, covered the pool and shut off its magick. Then the giants fled Powis, and not a bit do I know of what became of them. When the fae tried to dig out the pool, it was gone.

With its source of magical power gone, Caledfwlch’s defenses gradually faded. The next year, Prince Carniog himself broke through the freehold walls and slew right and left. With the Torche had enslaved a weak-kneed magus, Prester Fflydd was his name; at Carniog’s behest, Fflydd transformed Abernaeron into a small white fox. By a sad mistake of the magical effect, Rhonwen thought Abernaeron had died. Heavy was her heart,

- 952 Led by Queen Caerna, Gwynedd and Kingdom of Wool battle Carniog for control of Powis.
- 953 Powis, controlled by Prince Carniog, grows dark, unpredictable and dangerous.
- 954 Battle of Carniog’s Doom: Principalities of Dyfed and Gwynedd, Kingdom of Wool and refugees from Powis ally to defeat Carniog. Mage allies assist to avenge Abernaeron. After Carniog’s defeat, High Queen Caerna rules united Welsh principalities.

as all her life’s work fell to pieces around her — so heavy that she fell into despair, and she swallowed a quick poison.

Oh, oh, it is little heart I have to recite all these sorry events. Let me only add that Caer Caledfwlch fell, and of all those fine folk, Abernaeron alone did survive, and he only at Carniog’s pleasure. The Unseelie prince let the fox roam free on Mount Snowdon. They tell me the fox did dwell upon that mountain, all alone, for the rest of his life, and finally vanished 15 years later.

Only one piece of good news was there from the tragedy at Caledfwlch. That was the union, long overdue, of the other principalities to topple Carniog, and Queen Caerna of Gwynedd led them.

The armies clashed upon the white beach east of what is now Cardiff. Caerna led the feared Gloaming Covey of Claerwen, with their enchanted emerald swords that clashed with the deadly sun-swords of Glamorgan. Sidhe of Dyfed summoned griffins, and



a magus of Powis called upon old debts owed her by two Pen-y-Cabar wyrms. The sinuous dragons cast their great shadows against the sun, and the Glamorgan swords went out like spent candles.

In response, Carniog lit a great bonfire with the bodies of his fallen enemies. Holding magickal prisms before the flames, he focused the light into thin beams that sliced the wyrms right down the belly. The ancient dragons fled, leaving only fae enraged by the profanation of their dead. Yet rage did not help them, for Carniog used the Torc, and he kept hold of the Shining Sword. Against it none could stand.

The turning point came when, there on the beach, the deceitful magus Prester Fflydd turned on his master. No one knows why, but I think he may have given in to some kind of fae cantrip. Fflydd struck at Carniog from surprise, and though the mortal could not damage the Unseelie Prince, he did scratch the Black Torc.

Now hearken to what did happen: Carniog slew Fflydd on the instant. But the Torc, once scratched, turned loose good Prince Rhys, that Carniog and Morgan le Fay had entrapped in it those centuries ago. He emerged quite mad, yet in a froth he shouted to his mother — Queen Caerna, remember — “If he leaves the bounds of Cymru, he is doomed!” Then Rhys, too, fell dead on Carniog’s Shining Sword. But his death was not in vain.

Queen Caerna heard her son’s last words, and she knew at once what to do. Prince Carniog stood on the beach, within a few paces of the surf. Caerna gave quick commands to a magus of Powis, Clothra Seabreeze. Clothra chanted a spell and shed a drop of her blood to the sea-spirits, and down on the beach the surf rushed up to flow over Carniog’s feet.

It was no more than knee-deep, that water, and yet it meant that Carniog now stood offshore, beyond the bounds of Cymru. Carniog realized it and screamed, and at that moment, the Shining Sword of Glamorgan turned in his hand and struck him down. He fell into the surf, the Black Torc and Shining Sword slipped from him, and the whole sea went dead black for a day and a night. And that is the last that anyone has seen of Carniog for 10 centuries since.

I must stop here a while to speak of Queen Caerna. She was no bad woman, and in many ways a fine fae ruler; against Carniog, all Cymru trusted Caerna to do the right thing. But no great glory did her long reign bring Cymru, not to match that of Caledfwlch or Gwaelod. Caerna seemed always a bit close to the precipice of Banality, or what passed for Banality in those times. Nowhere do you see this more clearly than in her fondness for that most Banal activity, political intrigue.

Not many of the fair family have truck with intrigues, but not only did Caerna maneuver and connive always to extend her power, perforce she also lured opponents into the same dull maneuvering. This we see on Taliesin’s death, when Caerna sought the throne of Powis to go with her other lands. But as she schemed for power, so she made enemies — by the very act of her scheming, perhaps. No throne would these enemies allow her; instead, they clamored for Rhonwen to take the throne.

But the sad end of Rhonwen left her supporters without spirit, and Caerna grew strong in the following war against Carniog. She became high queen over all Cymru as well as her own Kingdom

- 1024 High Queen Caerna falls ill and her court grows weak.
- 1066 Welsh battle for independence prompts construction of numerous castles; many owned by mages and noble fae. Battle of Hastings.
- 1093 Robert FitzHamon, knight of William the Conqueror, given land in Cardiff. Builds Norman fort.
- 1160 Zurenzalle of House Merinita (Order of Hermes) disappears. Mages later find evidence that he is a changeling passing as human.
- 1170 Madoc, son of Owen Gwynedd, Prince of Gwynedd, lands in what is later Mobile Bay, Alabama and teaches Welsh to Native Americans.

of Wool in England. Still, though long and decent was her reign, it brought no great time for the fae. Sad, in a way, for in many of these same centuries of her reign, mortal Wales was enjoying its only prolonged stretch of independent sovereignty before falling to England. And there are English who will tell you today, that Wales too did not achieve much in its centuries of freedom, the liars.

Fancy that! Alabama, is it? I never did hear that before. Go on, Professor Twidmarch!

Well, now, poorly went the day for Caerna’s fae and the Hermetic mages who fought at Grimsfen Tor, but since Sam Haine has already summarized the battle, I will not go into it. The long and short of it was that Craftsmasons bulldozed both groups with deadly pikes and war machinery.

Now, until Grimsfen Tor, Queen Caerna had been ailing, and the land itself had come to echo her sadness. Wild rivers once teeming with fish ran barren, flowers wilted, forests grew dark and rambling. Even mortal Cymrians warred upon each other, burning the earth and forgetting the wise lays of old.

With the fabled loss at Grimsfen Tor and Caerna’s disappearance, the charmed places of Cymru faded one by one. The world of men grew stronger, and Glamour grew scarcer.

The throne empty, there was no more likely successor than Prince Gwyddno Garanhir, from the Land of Forgotten Plains. His support among the fae peaked as he moved the court from Caer Nantgwyllt in the Cambrians near Elan Valley to Caer Cerdigion. For a time, High King Gwyddno staved off Banality, creating anew the High Age that Cymru had known when Caerna was in her prime. With Cerdigion, all seemed right — but not for long.

- 1215 Loss at Grimsfen Tor: Scientific mages defeat Caerna and Hermetics, seize vital Node. Caerna disappears. As new high king, Gwyddno takes throne of Powis, renames it “Powys.”
- 1282 Edward I conquers Wales.
- 1300s Mabinogi, bardic legends of historical figures and magic, written down.
- 1315 King Gwyddno’s centenary. Cantrev Gwaelod, the “Jewel of Powys,” reaches peak of glory; contains 16 freeholds, including Caer Ceredigion.

- 1348 The Shattering; rise of Order of Reason. The Black Death. Sidhe flee to Arcadia, while commoner fae find refuge. Gates to Arcadia shatter.
- 1349 The Flooding of Gwaelod. The Awakened kings welcome surviving Kithain, who establish new freeholds in Snowdonia.

Caer Cerdigion: the Jewel of Powys, Cymru's Crown. Bards love to describe glorious Cerdigion, for nothing but Arcadia could exceed her in beauty and Glamour, and nothing but the Shattering could exceed the tragedy of her fall.

'Twas a great pity, Cerdigion's Dán. I have not the time now to repeat the sad tale of the Flooding of Gwaelod; what I will tell you is what bards tell me: Some of her freeholds live still, perhaps in the Dreaming, perhaps enchanted at the bottom of Cardigan Bay.

When Cerdigion and the rest of Gwaelod drowned, the Cantrev lost lives as well as great Glamour. Poor King Gwyddno died, as did his courtiers who were holding a great feast the night that Sethennin Feddw tore open the gates of Cardigan Bay. Now, King Gwyddno had always claimed that in a vision he'd given Myrddin one of the 13 Treasures of Britain, what's now known as the Hamper of Gwyddno — a cornucopia of bread. I won't be as polemic as our nocker friend last night, but I must say, this legend seems a bit out of sorts. If I were Myrddin coming to Gwyddno in a dream, I should have demanded Caer Cerdigion — certainly one of Britain's greatest treasures — and not some overblown breadmaking machine. Nonetheless, no one's sure if the Hamper was lost in the Flood, or if Myrddin really does have it. I'd wager, though, that skindiving in Cardigan Bay's the way to bet....

But, you childlings, don't lose hope, now. You see, on and off, stories about the Well of Cob surface — a deep well lost at the bottom of Cardigan Bay that, should its slate lid be removed, the bay waters will drain away, and the ancient freeholds of Cantrev Gwaelod will be restored. It is equally said that monstrous sea chimera guard the well, for they do not want their homes in the bay destroyed. Some eshu repeat tales that the Well of Cob taps deep into an underground network of lakes, and these eventually run through England into Scotland and Loch Ness. Nessie, they say, sometimes winters in these granite caverns far beneath our feet.

Now, Gwyddno was the last high king of the land, though many had preceded him in forgotten ages ago, and high queens like Caerna have succeeded him since. During Caerna's rule, the Awakened kings fled east to Snowdonia and established a kingdom over which they shared rulership. These kings were twins, two great mages with fae blood whose names are now lost to legend, known simply and forever as the Awakened kings.

Probably Verbena shamans, they lived in peace with the fae there, and they proved wise and just rulers. So loved they were that Caerna sometimes invited them to partake in Kithain celebrations at Caer Nantgwyllt.

Now, we'll dart ahead a few years to the Flooding of Gwaelod. The great hero Yvanaferch Dewys, seneschal of Snowdonia, saved the flood victims by leading them along high ground north to Mount Snowdon. (That is why to this day, we call changelings

who give comfort to the needy and show strong leadership "Dewyskith.") Dewys led the Kithain to Snowdonia, where the Awakened kings welcomed them. There, the kings sought to assist Dewys in settling the dispossessed Kithain by allowing them to establish freeholds throughout the area.

One freehold survived the flooding: Caer Badrig, whose story — along with the others of the Cantrev Gwaelod — is told in the eshu's record of events, *The Black Book of Carmarthen*. You may recognize this name, for mortals later stole the book and spun tales around its words. Though lost now, it is said that the *Carmarthen* contains prophecies as well as histories; should any of you happen to find it (and don't hold your breath), bring it to me and I'll give you a handsome reward!

Mysteries and beauty remain part of Cymrian heritage, whether that heritage belong to mortals or to Kithain or, for that matter, to mages such as my Ecstatics friends here.

Some legends have it that Owain Glyndwr was a wizard, as the professor here asserts, some that he was Kith, some that he was a mortal born to a line of Welsh princes. I believe him to be a mortal favored by Kithain, a fae-friend. Whatever he was, it is true that early in our history, he rebelled against the English Marcher Lords, the English barons who controlled the border territory "Marches" between England and Wales. After Edward proclaimed his English son "Prince of Wales," resentment grew. In 1400, Glyndwr proclaimed himself Prince of Wales and led a rebellion against the English with the help of Celtic allies in Scotland, Ireland, France and Northumbria. I shiver to think of what might happen to such a one as Glyndwr today, though there are many nationalists who'd like nothing more than to follow his path.

In 1404, Glyndwr captured Harlech and Cardiff and established a parliament in Machynlleth, where (I'm told) there's now a Chantry of mages who run the Centre for Alternative Technology (low-energy houses, organic gardens, and the like).

Victory was fleeting. But four years later, Glyndwr's French allies formed a truce with the English, and the Rebellion failed. Now, there's no mystery in this, but in what follows...perhaps.

When his rebellion collapsed, Glyndwr disappeared. Some say he fled to the same caves near Llyn Brianne where my namesake, Twm Siôn Cati, lived as an outlaw. Strong opinion among sage Kithain holds that one of the first tests of the Alliance between Cymrian Seelie and Unseelie was the saving of Glyndwr. To ensure good faith, both courts worked together to spirit Glyndwr away to the now-fallen Caer Dolbadarn. Records of his passing away were lost when

- 1349-1969 The Interregnum.
- 1350-1416 Wizard Owain Glyndwr, descendant of Welsh princes.
- 1352+ The Alliance: Seelie and Unseelie cease hostilities.
- 1404 Owain Glyndwr's Rebellion.
- 1408 Failure of Owain Glyndwr's Rebellion as French make truce with Henry IV.
- 1416 Owain Glyndwr disappears.

the ancient Wyrn Dyrnwdd succumbed to a draconic form of Bedlam and attacked the keep.

If Glyndwr was indeed a wizard, he may still live. The beauty of the mystery is that Wales' last native leader might yet bide his time, awaiting the right moment for the resurgence of Cymru.

Now, long for the redcaps were the years after Glyndwr's Rebellion and the mortal Wars of the Roses. They fought a few skirmishes here and there, but there was nothing to satisfy a battlelust born of faerie nature.

In general, Cymrian fae were at peace with themselves, and when they weren't, they were fighting to survive the ravages of steadily growing Banality and mortal populations. Burgess lords were continually ordering their redcap subjects to stand down, for they wanted no undue attention.

In this climate, the redcaps grew restless — and, really, one cannot blame them, for 'tis in their natures to fight, not to pick peacetime pansies. Cymrian redcaps secretly came together, some of them murmuring threats against English mortals, often praising their fine, plump flesh.

In 1486, a steadily growing band of renegade redcaps and mortal bandits known as the Gwylliaid Cochion Mawddwy (Red-Haired Bandits of Mawddwy) met in the mountains of Gwynedd and began to terrorize the people of Meirionydd and Montgomery. There, they chased young children, thieved from passersby, ripped out throats of cattle, sullied wells with decaying entrails, and the like.

Over the next half-century, the population of redcap bandits grew until everyone feared the mountains of Gwynedd and the surrounding areas. Few fae would venture near, afraid that the entire changeling population there had entered Bedlam.

Decades passed. The redcaps of the Gwylliaid Cochion Mawddwy grew even more restless until, in 1548, a splinter group opposed to England's recent consumption of Wales marched into England and murdered 20 fae courtiers of the Kingdom of Wool. Changelings of various Cymrian caers across their march tried to prevent the event, but the Gwylliaid Cochion Mawddwy of the so-called Redcap Rebellion persisted.

It so happened that the courtier victims were most unloved by the high king Albion of England. Had they been in the fae king's favor, I would wager that entire Welsh Kithain populations would have been wiped from the face of the earth. As it was, Albion set the mortal authorities on their tracks as the redcaps returned to Wales. With hidden assistance from certain English trolls, the mortal army led by Baron Lewis Owen and Sir John

- 1486 Gwylliaid Cochion Mawddwy (Red-Haired Bandits of Mawddwy in Gwynedd) arise.
- 1535 Wales becomes part of Britain.
- 1548 Redcap Rebellion: Splinter group of Gwylliaid Cochion Mawddwy marches into England and kills fae courtiers in Kingdom of Wool.
- 1555 Christmas Day: A human army captures and kills 100 Gwylliaid bandits.

1565 Earliest Rheibau ferch Llandona form Chantry in Snowdonia. Many reclusive fae already live here (dating back to Flooding of Gwaelod) and contest the Rheibau's arrival through pranks.

1589 Rivalry between fae and Rheibau ferch Llandona (Verbena) develops full force after years of escalating pranks.

1590 Snowdon Pact forged.

Wyn of Gwydir captured and hanged over 100 of the Gwylliaid Cochion Mawddwy on Christmas Day, 1555. This date is still celebrated throughout the Kingdom of Smoke, where English fae string up red berries on Yule and hang them over doorways to prevent Bedlam from entering their freeholds.

A Verbena coven now lives in Anglesey which has forgotten its roots in Snowdonia's past. There, the earliest Rheibau ferch Llandona, or Witch Daughters of Llandona, set down roots, and retreated far from the travails of life on the Marches, where they originally lived.

Now, in the mid-15th century, the Awakened kings had left Snowdonia, persuaded to fight the Order of Reason by the tales the March of the Nine brought with them. (These nine mages, whose tale is recounted elsewhere, led a failed attempt to convince the Awakened throughout the world to resist the Order of Reason, now known as the Technocracy).

So the Rheibau ferch Llandona formed a Chantry near the ruins of Caer Dolbadarn, near Llanberis. They were retreating not only from the contested Marches, but also from the witch trials they'd foreseen in Britain's near future. When they arrived, they encountered the fae who'd settled in Snowdonia after the Flooding of Gwaelod centuries before. These fae'd been around so long by then that they considered themselves Snowdonian natives, and thus wanted nothing to do with the Rheibau.

A year passed, and the Rheibau had to endure all manner of pranks intended to inconvenience them into leaving. I'm sure the pookas in the audience could regale us with stories from *The Snowdon Cycle* — that is, the tales of all the pranks that the Snowdon pookas conceived and carried out in the years that followed. Come to think on it, I believe that's scheduled for tomorrow night. So the Snowdonian changelings did not surrender for several decades. They didn't want the Rheibau bringing trouble into their land about as much as they didn't want trouble from the Rheibau themselves.

Finally, the pranks became so intolerable that the Rheibau confronted the Snowdonian fae directly. "Look you," said the Rheibau, "we will promise to protect Snowdonia from mortal development in exchange for the use of the Glamour in these mountains. But you will have our protection only if you give up your pranks."

The changelings looked at each other, then at Gloddfa Ganol the Wizened, the troll lord of Snowdonia at the time, and nodded in agreement. From the tales, the pookas stood across the room shaking their heads, arms crossed, pouting. Gloddfa agreed, and the Snowdon Pact was cast, a geas of sorts upon each party.

Now, legends of the Black Dog, though mostly thought of as English, arose from one of the guardians that the Rheibau posted at the borders of Snowdonia. Other guardians, though not under the Rheibau's control, included unicorns, griffins, and Cymrydd the Wym, who was a weak descendant of the great dragons of past ages. For their part, the Kithain met their agreement, allowing the Rheibau use of the Quintessence atop Snowdon's peak while not playing any — well, almost any — pranks on their benefactors.

One of the most shameful times in Kithain history, the Brecon Retreat. The Alliance had lasted over three centuries when a magickal plague broke out among Cymrian Kithain. Some mages say the plague resulted from a duel between two Verbena Masters of life magick, while others think that some irresponsible English Hermetic twisted a Welsh Verbena's work while experimenting on diseases in his laboratory. Whatever the cause, the plague arrived in 1665. The borders were sealed at about the same time British mortals were beginning to die. The Seelie blamed the disfiguring disease on the Unseelie, the Unseelie on the Seelie. Distrust erupted, skirmishes were fought, blood was spilled. Months passed in chaos. Then one Unseelie freehold from the empty moors of the Black Mountain in Brecon Beacons began a rumor that the Seelie sluagh were plague-carriers. Nobles rode out early one day on their hunting horses, and came back that evening with the head of a sluagh.

The Black Mountain Unseelie continued to hunt sluagh even after the plague abated. Seelie hid sluagh in freeholds and fortresses, but the unfortunates caught outside were hunted to extinction. Worse yet, some Seelie even began to believe the rumors, and sent the sluagh out to be tracked.

One by one, disenfranchised sluagh made their way to the Dan-yr-Ogof Caves in Brecon Beacons, where they were told safety lay. Hundreds of sluagh crept through the labyrinth of caves there, waiting for the hunters to hear of them, waiting for revenge.

The Unseelie never came, so the sluagh organized themselves into an army and marched to the fortress of Carreg Cennen on the slopes of Black Mountain, where the Unseelie freehold was located. One by one, they slipped through cracks in walls, through arrowslits and under doors, hundreds of them. They strangled Unseelie in the night, so that not a one of them was spared.

Quite a while it took the Welsh fae to recover from the dark days of the Brecon Retreat and the Great Plague. But the trouble wasn't over.

In Snowdonia, the Rheibau ferch Llandona had decided to follow what was becoming common practice then, allowing other types of mages into one's Chantry. Until then, theirs had been all Verbena. Now, they'd invited members of the Fellowship of Pan from England to share their Chantry and the Quintessence atop Mount Snowdon.

Well, the Snowdonian changelings were none too happy about this development, you can be sure. There was a lot of talk about tossing the Rheibau out, and then a lot of talk about just

- 1760s Banality enters Wales: open-cast mining, poor conditions for workers.
- 1800s Methodism, chapel and temperance firmly established in Welsh culture.
- 1830s Bute family inherits land in Cardiff area and begins to develop Cardiff as a port.
- 1839 First Rebecca Riot: farmers dressed as women protest rents in South Wales; pookas inspire idea of dressing up.
- 1843 Second Rebecca Riot.
- 1851 Methodism takes root; very mundane communities.
- 1864 Nockers form Black Jewel Freehold near thriving Llywyn Llywd mine at border of Dyfed and Powys.

how that might happen. Finally, a pooka wilder named Snitch came up with some ideas that he somehow forgot to present to his freehold's grumps. Would the Rheibau miss their Eye of Garanhir? Would they mind if Snitch made their Chantry glow like the moon at night? Would it make a big difference to them if the mountain people of Beddgelert could hear the Rheibau's voices 10 miles away?

For our Ecstatic friends in the audience, this event in history is known as *Snitch's Last Hurrah*. It could also be called *Yes, Snitch, 'Oops' Is Right*.

Oh, Snitch and his little minions made these things happen — bang, bang, bang, like that. And, like that, who notices? The Order of Reason. Mages begin to filter into Snowdonia, investigating the oddly glowing Chantry.

The Rheibau pack their bags and left that night. Snitch's Last Hurrah left the Snowdonian fae without the protection they'd enjoyed for the last few centuries. Worse, it attracted the very mortal attention they'd hoped to avoid.

For their part, the Rheibau considered the Snowdon Pact void. What happened to them? The professor tells me they ended up in Anglesey after a series of adventures throughout northern Wales. Snitch was upbraided and later set in charge of keeping mortals away from Snowdonia. Such responsibility was never a pooka's friend.

For a century the mortal Welsh, with all their mines of slate and copper and iron and coal, had happy relations withnockers. Human miners took the mysterious knocking sounds as good omens; they thought thenockers led them to good seams and kept their machinery in good working order. What's that back there? It was true? Yes, well...there you are then.

Of all the mines in Wales, the finest friendship between miner and nocker blessed the rich coal shafts of Llywyn Llywd in the Rhondda Valley. No coal mine has ever been thought magical, for there is no harsher workplace on this green Earth. But wonder at the world comes always from people and Kithain, whether or not their place inspires it; and those Llywyn Llywd miners knew wonder. Even some of the mine owners, who are, by and large, the most deadly Banal folk who ever drew breath, even a few of this mine's owners had a touch of innocence to them, for they came of the proud and happy Morgenstern family.

Now, now, quiet, you lot! Settle down and hear me out. We have most of us heard of Lloyd Morgenstern today. But I

- 1665-6 Great Plague. The Brecon Retreat.
- 1723 Snitch's Last Hurrah.

tell you that it was a much different Morgenstern who helped bring industry to Wales. No one would call Hugh Morgenstern (Lloyd's grandsir) a man filled with wonder, but he treated his workers a fraction better than the other owners. And he took a fancy to coal carvings, which is to say, polished lumps of anthracite carved with pictures of miners, or their wives, or sometimes even fanciful ideas of nockers.

The carvings, it may be, drew the nockers to consider Llywyn Llywd their favorite mine. Or it was the miners' genial regard for the nockers, perhaps. Never mind. The Kithain established a fine freehold in the mine, is all, one of several I have heard of in such places. Black Jewel Freehold lay off a deep side tunnel visible only to the fair family and to mortals with the faerie sight. Sometimes, as I hear it, the nockers would lure an unsuspecting miner down their tunnel, treat him to the night or week of his life, heal his lungs of the cruel coal dust, and send him back, befuddled and yet starry-eyed, to the mortal world — where only an hour or so had passed.

Yet the Black Jewel, too, has gone away, and all its Kithain with it. No doubt Professor Twidmarch brings up the tragic tale in his next bits of timeline.

1883-1978 Architect Sir Clough Williams-Ellis. Built bizarre Italianate village of Portmeirion "to my own fancy on my own chosen site" in northern Wales (1940s-70s). Site later becomes a minor freehold (1979).

1913 Cardiff is world's busiest coal-exporting port, shipping coal in via rail from South Wales mines.

1914-18 World War I.

1920-39 Great Depression.

1939-45 World War II; Welsh coal mining industry takes an upturn.

1950s Welsh mages fight uphill battle for positions in English government.

1955 Cardiff becomes Welsh capital during decline of industry in Wales (especially coal and docks).

1959 Changelings introduce red dragon on Wales' new flag.

1965 Welsh Syndicate opens Big Pit mining and industrial museums in Blaenafon, South Wales.

1967 Welsh Hermetic mages Rowena Jones and Morgan ap Maen get Welsh Language Act passed.

1969 The Resurgence: humans walk on Moon; lost trods, pathways, freeholds restored. Noble fae return to Earth.

1970s Syndicate reciprocates by forcing decline in steel and coal industries in Wales (create mass unemployment, return to Banality). Virtual Adepts partially alleviate this in the '80s with a movement toward high-tech industries.

1970-73 The War of Ivy. Welsh commoners do not respect Welsh sidhe, but accept them more willingly than English.



Too much have you heard already about the War of Ivy. Too fresh in all our memories, save yours, child. If you remember naught else, remember these words: never again. We Kithain cannot afford to kill one another, with so many threats about us these days.

As for the rest of the professor's outline, we indeed owe a debt to the mages Jones and ap Maen for their involvement in the mortal political process. Without their aid, I believe the enchanting music of the Welsh language would have eventually passed beyond living tongues.

I do not worry that you will think life in Llywyn Llwyd was all beer and skittles. Not a soul alive now can imagine that coal mining was anything other than the filthy, exhausting, killing life it was. That book of Richard Llewellyn, *How Green Was My Valley* — it is truth indeed that book tells.

But at various times people tried to improve working conditions in the mines, and that time in this tale was the 1980s. You wilders today will hardly believe this, but none other than young Lloyd Morgenstern — grandson of Hugh and son of Clive, and incidentally heir to ownership of the entire mine — Lloyd worked as hard as any to improve the miners' lot. For he himself was of the fair folk.

Some of you gasp, and I daresay you should. This is the truth: Lloyd was a nocker. He had his Chrysalis down in the mine, during an inspection, and in his fear he raced off down the tunnel straight into the Black Jewel. Thenockers took the fledge through his Saining; he swore vassalage to House Dougal; he returned home and set about improving the miners' conditions. Yet a hard task that was, and Lloyd too new awake to do it. His own father rejected his proposals and threatened to dispatch the young man to an overseas office. All impatient, Lloyd grew desperate.

One sad December night down in the mine, as I heard it, Lloyd went bad. Not the Bedlam, not Banality, but worse: total disillusionment. Lloyd freely threw over his fae nature and swore to destroy the wonders he had learned to see. He was not sane, that young man. He became one of the Dauntain, the Autumn People. In that one night, he destroyed all thenockers of the Black Jewel, and their freehold as well, so that no trace remains.

Lloyd turned to staunch opposition of the miners' cause, and in due time he inherited the mine. He started shutting down other mines, destroying their freeholds, and hunting down the Kithain. Now quite the rich man Lloyd is, and clever too. And still every bit the Dauntain. A sad story, sad it is.

Friends, in all truth do I tell you that I have not a bit to say about the last of these topics Professor Twidmarch has uncovered,

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| 1973+ | High King David rules the fae from fortress Tara-Nar (North America); Britain joins the European Community. |
| 1980s+ | Hermetics work on improving higher education in Wales. |
| 1984 | Year-long miner's strike fails; union power declines. |
| 1991 | Llywyn Llwyd mine abandoned. Fall of the Black Jewel Freehold and Lloyd Morgenstern. |
| 1996 | Verbena of Anglesey report that a unicorn has emerged from the deep wilds of the forests in Anglesey. |

and sorry I am for it, but they make thin tales compared to the fall of Morgenstern. Thirsty, too, am I, so I shall wrap this up before my three good companions drink all that memorable wine for themselves. What time have I left, two minutes? Very well, let me just tell you two things more.

First, remember: The Dreaming still lives strong in Cymru! If only we can drive back the Technocratic bastards and their Banal lot of followers and name a high king or queen, then much good will come of it. After all that has blighted the heart and soul of our homeland, there is wonder yet in Wales.

Second, I'll tell you a funny little Cymrian tale that some of you foreigners may not have heard, and then I'll be off. I heard tell of an old man of Llangolen who came home after a long journey through the woods, where he sat by the hearth with his old wife and their black cat. The old man said, "The strangest thing did I see today. A fog came over the wood as I walked, and I lost my way. I saw a light and made for it, and I came upon a large oak tree. I climbed the tree to look for the light, and down in a hollow of the tree I saw a ceremony. A funeral, it looked to be, except the mourners were not people, but cats."

Here the old man stopped in his talk, for the black cat at his feet was staring at him ever so hard. "Yes," the old man went on, "the mourners and pallbearers were cats, and the pall were marked with a crown. And all the cats were crying, Peter is dead, Peter is dead."

The old man got no further, for his black cat suddenly cried out, "By Jove! Old Peter's dead, and I'm king of the Cats!" He rushed up the chimney, and they never saw him again. Thank you all, and now open that first bottle, my friends, for I am on my way!



Chapter Eight: Cymru, the Land of Song and Companions

*Do not go gentle into that good night,
Old age should burn and rave at close of day;
Rage, rage against the dying of the light.*

— Dylan Thomas, "Do Not Go Gentle Into That Good Night"

Close your eyes and imagine an icy stream of clear mountain water washing over your bare ankles. Now imagine a cool, damp breeze as it blows through ancient rowan trees. The wind carries songs of bleating sheep and harp strings from far down the valley. The scent of fresh bread and sizzling bacon tickles your nose. As you open your eyes, soft clouds roll over foreboding crags, taking you into their shadowy embrace.

Wales offers a palate of pastoral delights for any visitor, mortal or fae. Small in size, it holds great wealth in its scenic river valleys, craggy peaks and sun-washed shores. As far as the eye can see, Wales radiates an enigmatic charm. Any who view it are overcome with a mood of joy and wonder. Even the most disenchanted find the verdant countryside and its people entrancing.

A major quest for the Welsh fae and Awakened is the recovery of the past. As wondrous as Wales is today, it is a pale shadow of its former glory. The Industrial Revolution fatally wounded much of the land in the south, once just as wild and lush as north Wales. The fae particularly want to recover the riches of the Lost Lowland in the Principality of Powys.

Yet a lack of unity threatens Cymru. Unlike the Kithain of Concordia, the Welsh fae live under no central rule; the jurisdiction of their own independent cantreys is all they have ever known. Some relish this freedom. But many others long for a high king to vanquish the corruption of the Dauntain in the

Principality of Glamorgan, unite the cantreys and bring Cymru into a new Spring. Among the Kithain of Cymru are several would-be kingmakers who plot incessantly to seat someone on the long-vacant Throne of Dragons.

The mages of Wales fall into three main camps. The first camp remains loyal to the Traditions. These men and women descend from groups of mages present in Wales before the end of the Grand Convocation in 1466: remnants of the Hermetic House Merinita, practitioners of the Wyck and proto-Cultists of Ecstasy who arrived during Roman times. A small number of Technocracy representatives form the second camp; mostly from the New World Order, they look to capitalize on Wales' new drive towards tourism, digital communications and international corporations. The third and smallest group are representatives of the Harbingers of Avalon, a tiny cabal within the larger frame of the Technocracy, devoted to the renewed hegemony of Britain. The Tradition mages know nothing of this latter group, confining themselves instead to a revival of ancient lore and primal ritual to invigorate their own dwindling powers. The Technocracy as a whole knows little about the Harbingers. The Harbingers seek to build a new Camelot, one that enforces rigid law and order so Britannia might once again rule the world. As the Harbingers work directly against the aims of both Tradition mages and the Kithain, a troubled future looms in Wales.

The Welsh are one small portion of the Celtic peoples who settled Britain long before the Roman invasions. The Welsh language is an Indo-European one related to other Celtic languages such as Manx, Cornish and Breton, as well as Irish and Scottish Gaelic. "Y Cymri," meaning "the companions," is what the Welsh call themselves. The people of Wales are very proud of their language and heritage; most public signs, for example, appear in both Welsh and English. Other Welsh speakers live in England, the United States, Australia and a small region of Argentina called Patagonia.

The Celtic ancestors of the Welsh moved into the British Isles between the 5th and 6th centuries B.C.. They established separate tribes around one or two small enclaves and created a hierarchy of nobility, warriors, commoners and slaves. Many elements of this family structure remained intact through the Middle Ages.

Today, almost three million people live in Wales, many in the large cities of the south such as Cardiff. Dairy and sheep-farming dominate the north and central portions of the country. Industry and mining, which sharply decreased in the last decade, cover most of southern Wales. With the depletion of many 19th-century mines, foreign investments poured into the industrialization of south Wales; the Japanese led the way in this venture. While this provided employment, the environment paid a heavy price. Many towns all over Wales now concentrate on tourism as a means to make money without harming the land.

Politics and Economics

My friend, you would not tell with such high zest

The old lie: Dulce et decorum est

Pro patria mori. (It is sweet and proper to die for one's country.)

— Wilford Owen, "Dulce et Decorum Est"

Less than 5% of all visitors to the British Isles visit Wales, and more's the pity, for they miss seeing a land where the warm, slow, steadfast pace of rural life still exists. Yet, Wales is also a land in a state of transition. New sectors of science and technology, along with heavy foreign investments, are replacing the old mines and heavy industry of the south, and in most cases, the British government actively recruits these investors. In the north, however, many families are changing the venues of their farms from sheep and dairy herds to tree farms and tourist accommodations in order to survive. Despite generous multinational incentives, unemployment remains high in Wales. The average personal income hovers around \$22,000... but the average house costs around \$131,000. Formal schooling is compulsory until age 15, and about 3% of the population take part in higher or continuing education. Almost 20% of the population speak Welsh fluently, and the language has enjoyed a revival in recent years.

Welsh Lexicon

Bryn (brin) — A hill.

Bwlch (boolch) — A pass.

Caer — A personal holding, often a grand fortress or castle. It could also be a small house depending on the rank and wealth of the owner, usually a freehold.

Cantrev — Political unit roughly corresponding to a county, overseen by an appointed noble in service to the ruler of the encompassing principality.

Cefn (kevin) — A ridge.

Craig — A rocky outcropping.

Cwm (koom) — A valley.

Cymer (kye-mer) — A meeting of rivers, often places of mystical powers and sightings.

Glyn (glen) — Equivalent of a glade.

Llan (thlan) — An enclosure, typically protecting a freehold.

Llyn (thlin) — A lake.

Llys (thlis) — A meadhall; equivalent to a hearth.

Maen — Made of stone.

Mynydd (munuth) — A mountain.

Pentre — A homestead; equivalent to a manor.

Plas (plass) — A mansion; equivalent to a lodge.

Principality — Political unit made up of several cantrevs, overseen by a prince to whom the ruling nobles of the cantrev give fealty; comparable to a small kingdom.

Sarn — An old road; the Welsh word for "trod."

Tylwyth Teg (tuh-loo-uth teg) — The traditional name Welsh fae use for themselves.

Pronunciation

Welsh pronunciation can be tricky; this guide merely serves as a basic framework.

CH — As in *Bach*.

DD — Th as in *the*.

F — Sounded as *v*.

G — Always hard as in *get*.

LL — Sounded as *thl*.

RH — Breathy, as in *rhee*.

S — Always as in *sit*.

Vowels can be long, occurring at the end of a syllable, or before n, l, r, i or u; or, they can be short, used alone, or followed by the consonants c, p, t, m or ng.

A — Long as in *father*, short as in *cap*.

E — Long as in *pell*, short as in *pen*.

I — Long as in *machine*, short as in *pin*.

O — Long as in *more*, short as in *pop*.

U — Long as the *ee* in *spleen*, short as the *i* in *mitten*.

W — Long as in *fool*, short as in *took*.

Y — As the *u* in *putty* except when Y begins a word, then it is pronounced as the *i* in *knit*.

YW — As the *ow* in *cow*.

WY — Combines the *oo* in *pool* and the *e* in *set*, except after G when the Y becomes like the *i* in *fit*.

Mage Politics: One for One, None for All

The Awakened of Wales, small in numbers, are generally a private lot. They guard their secrets from outsiders and even potential allies. The earliest willworkers in Wales were the Wyck; their alliance with the fae gave birth to a powerful family of mages called the *Rheibau ferch Llandona*, the Witch-daughters of Llandona (singular, *Rheibes ferch Llandona*). Later Roman and Norman invasions brought Seers of Chronos and Hermetics to Cymru. The Technocracy had little interest in Wales until the 19th century, when Welsh coal mines promised extraordinary profits. Recent Technocratic interest relates to Welsh advances in communication and computers.

Factions of Tradition mages, such as the *Rheibau ferch Llandona*, pay lip service to their modern counterparts like the Verbena, but most are reluctant to take part in the Ascension War. If the Technocracy can strengthen its hold on the mind-set of the average person through welcome increases in science and technology, the *Rheibau ferch Llandona* may not have a choice. The Harbingers of Avalon bid for power from behind carved doors with public school charm and judicious use of the pound. They worry little about the threat of the “quaint” magick of the Verbena and others. They, instead, worry about transforming Wales from a land of pastoral wonder into a stoic nightmare of upper-crust propriety. Once Britannia returns to her preeminence in the world order, more than enough time will remain to rein in the rebellious peasants.

Sian Rowlands, *Rheibes ferch Llandona*: “Technocracy? Ascension War? Well, yes, um, sure I know what’s going on. But that doesn’t leave much time for things here at Llandona, does it? Who will tend the fields, care for the flocks, cure the sick and all that? Not to mention training the young ones! Sorry, but I’ve got quite a handful right in my own garden without looking for more trouble.”

Jack O’Kent: “I’ve protected Gwynet and Wales for years, and by gum, I’ll do so as long as I have breath in my body. These Technocrats are responsible for bringing in all this newfangled science, you say? Don’t think I like that very much. What’s the matter with the way we’ve always done things around here? Why do these folks have to come in and muck with it all?”

Sir Mortimer Evans, Harbinger of Avalon, Seat of Cardiff: “Wales is on the verge of a magnificent new age. This is the ancestral home of our greatest dynasty: the Tudors. It is a land that exhibits proof of the might and majesty of the British spirit. In the future, it shall host the lords of a new Camelot as they fly their hawks and bridle their steeds, taking whatever is needful, bearing witness to the renewed glory of Britannia.”

Rachel Poldark, Order of Hermes: “Standoffish snobs, that’s what I say. Turtles! It’s like the Awakened in Wales have their heads buried in the sand of their beaches. They can’t see what’s happening right under their very noses! Granted, I didn’t notice any HIT Marks running around, but I guarantee it’s just a matter of time before those idyllic Llandona types have to stop sniffing the herbs and open their eyes to what’s going on!”

Toshiro Kusaka, New World Order: “I’m delighted to say that advances in Wales are increasing. As with the rest of Britain, we’ve more televisions, cable connections, on-line sources and even cellular phones! Syndicate funds pouring into Cardiff also strengthen our position. Our future plans involve getting the tourism industry to promote Wales as a prime spot for technological investments.”

Over the years, administrators have divided Wales into various regions. The latest division occurred in April 1996, cutting the country into 22 sectors. Local officials answer to executives in Cardiff who in turn are accountable to London. Historically, Wales was an independent kingdom between the 5th and 13th centuries; previously, it was a Roman territory. From 1267 to 1282, the country briefly enjoyed nominal autonomy under the Treaty of Montgomery, but the English recanted their bargain and brutally subjugated the land. Only under the rebel leadership of Prince Owain Glyndwr in the second decade of the 15th century did the Welsh ever approach independence. Since 1535, Wales has been an official annex of England, and since 1801, a constituent of the United Kingdom.

Any reader of Welsh history will quickly note the ebb and flow of resistance against English rule. In the 20th century, desire for self-government coalesced into a formal political movement called Plaid Cymru, or the Party of Wales. Formed in 1925, this socialist group aims to secure self-government for Wales, ostensibly to preserve Welsh culture and international rights for the country.

Plaid Cymru currently holds 10% of the 38 Welsh seats in the British Parliament and continues to publish a newspaper and various bulletins, supporting itself chiefly on voluntary contributions.

Climate and Geography

A man who stays at home will learn nothing.

— Traditional Welsh saying

Like much of Britain, Wales has a temperate climate, warmed by currents from the South Atlantic. Temperatures range from near freezing in the winters to sunny 60s and 70s in the summertime. Rain and overcast skies are common, and a chilly summer shower is not unusual. High peaks such as Mount Snowdon have snow at all times of the year.

The land of Wales forms a peninsula on England’s western border, covering about 8000 square miles (12872 square km),

Changeling Politics: The Subject Was Roses

Much like the mages, the fae of Cymru dwell in fractious disharmony. However, diverse interests and passions rather than noble or commoner loyalties divide the Kithain. The by-and-large commoner population of Gwynedd wants to restore Powys, the lost land of their ancestors, but lack the strong leadership, knowledge and power necessary to do so. Clwyd, home of two mighty sidhe, hovers at the edge of a civil war; moreover, the principality's residents look with curious and eager eyes north to the Kingdom of Dalriada and its charismatic ruler, Ross. Glamorgan is lost, and the noble prince of Dyfed strangely refuses to interfere with matters outside his border. Only in Gwynt is there any real piss and vinegar among the populace, mostly commoners, for they are ready to defend themselves against any incursions from Glamorgan, or elsewhere if necessary.

The Kithain who want a high king (or queen) of Cymru doubly outnumber those who do not. While they would, of course, prefer a candidate from Wales, many would give support, if not undying loyalty, to a capable and just high king from Scotland or perhaps Ireland. Hence the debate over King Ross, his marriage to a noble fae of Cymru, and co-rulership with her, has some distinct advantages. What all Tylwyth Teg *do* agree on is that no "Sassanach" should hold command over Cymru; most Welsh fae would rather immigrate to the New World than see the English control their homeland. Many might even start a long and bloody war over the issue.

Blodwen, Seelie sidhe, maid to Countess Gwrly: "I saw the heather bouquets the king of Dalriada sent my lady. Oh, what fun it would be if there was a wedding! More than enough time has passed for something good to happen around here. I'm not the only one tired of all the skirmishes and such. Cymru needs a strong ruler, and if the Prince of Dyfed won't do it, someone else will have to. My lady and King Ross might be just what Cymru needs!"

Ceridwen, Seelie eshu, maid to Countess Angharad: "You should see the lovely flowers the King of Dalriada sent my lady! Finally, something pleasant other than reports of nasty battles along the valley. I don't know about Ross's intentions, but they're bound to be more interesting than all the squabbles going on here in Clwyd. Besides, Angharad and King Ross would be a lovely couple...just what we need here in Cymru!"

Ulric One-Horn, Unseelie troll mercenary: "My faith in the sidhe is not great, but rule is their birthright and so should they have their day. I will pledge my battle ax to any Kithain who can restore Glamorgan and Powys, and set up some decent sort of military in this kingdom, even if it turns out to be one of those damnable pooka that plague us here in Gwynedd. And woe betide those who would stand in the way of turning Cymru into a decent place to hang my weapon!"

McGowan, Seelie redcap traveler: "Ross this, Ross that...well, I'll tell you right here and now, I don't give a rat's piss about that stinkin' Scottish haggis! That prick's one reason I left Dalriada! What business of his is it to be comin' down here and wootin' those two sidhe wenches? This is Cymru, not some forsaken flower-covered bog! We can take care of ourselves without any help from Scotland, England or wherever!"

Derwyn ap Allyn, Seelie Pooka performer: "No, I didn't hear rumors some Scottish sidhe twit was thinking about taking over Clwyd. Yes, of course it would be a grand idea! I'm always up for rule by a bandy-legged, skirt-wearing pansy. I mean, we don't any have trouble here in Gwynt. Why on earth should we need someone who can lead and protect us? I daresay the first thing he would do would be to vanquish the Dauntain, rebuild Powys and make peace in Clwyd. I'm sure this Ross character would have a clear understanding of what life here in Cymru is like, oh yes indeed."

Dylan, Prince of Dyfed: "I feel the accusing stares from the North and the East. I hear the whispered rumors that I am turning my back on the Kithain of Cymru by not demanding kingship of this land. All of you must simply accept my word that this honor is not one I may take! Cymru will one day have a mighty ruler, but this role is not for me. I beg of you to believe me and allow me to continue just and fair sovereignty of my beloved Dyfed."

roughly 160 miles (254.44 km) long and 60 miles (96.54 km) wide. Counterclockwise, the Irish Sea, St. George's Channel and the Bristol Channel surround all but the eastern portion of the country. Major rivers include the Dee, the Conwy, the Teifi, the Wye, the Severn and the Tywi.

Wales is well-known for its hauntingly beautiful mountains and valleys. The Cambrian Mountains bisect Wales from north to south, and the highest peak is Mount Snowdon at 3560 feet. Other major mountains and ranges include the Brecon Beacons in the southeast, and Cadair Idris and Carnedd Llewellyn in the northwest. Most of the country's lowlands fall along the coast from the northwest to the southwest, and along the English borders.

Twenty-two "unitary authority boundaries" divide Wales into counties; this is only the latest in a series of territorial divisions since the Act of Union in 1535, which joined Wales with England.

Travel

*To live in Wales is to be conscious
At dusk of the spilled blood
That went to the making of the wild sky,
Dyeing the immaculate rivers
In all their courses.*

— R.S. Thomas, "The Welsh Landscape"

From the mountains to the sea, over 33,000 kilometers (20,460 miles) of roads and 1,508 kilometers (935 miles) of rail connect all points in Wales. Travel through the crags sometimes takes a while longer than expected, but the views are always breathtakingly spectacular. Recent innovations include the "Great Little Trains of Wales," which take riders to picturesque points such as Mount Snowdon. Roads and railways connect easily

The Principalities of Cymru

Six principalities comprise the Kingdom of Cymru. Clwyd, Gwynedd, Dyfed and Gwynt remain viable realms, while Powys and Glamorgan are lost to Banality and neglect. Clwyd, Land of Two Valleys, dominates the northeast. Gwynedd, Land of Mountains and Meadows, covers much of the northwest. The ruined realm of Powys falls in the center of Cymru, spreading from Cardigan Bay in the west to England in the east. Dyfed, Land of Seas and Shores, lies on a peninsula surrounded by Cardigan Bay, St. George's Channel and the Bristol Channel. Glamorgan, the Land of Black Rowan, extends over south central Cymru. Its neighbor Gwynt, the Borderland, rests just south of Powys and northeast of Glamorgan. Clwyd, Powys and Gwynt all share a border with England's Kingdom of Smoke.

Ynys Môn, the Isle of Anglesey

Just off the north-west coast of Wales lies the beautiful and mysterious island of Anglesey. During the Middles Ages, Anglesey served as an agricultural center with its fertile fields and waters thick with fish and marine life. Anglesey is also home to a town with the longest name in Britain: Llanfairpwllgwyngyllgogerychwyrndrobwlllantysiliogogoch, or Llanfairpwll, as locals, especially sign-painters and mapmakers, usually call it.

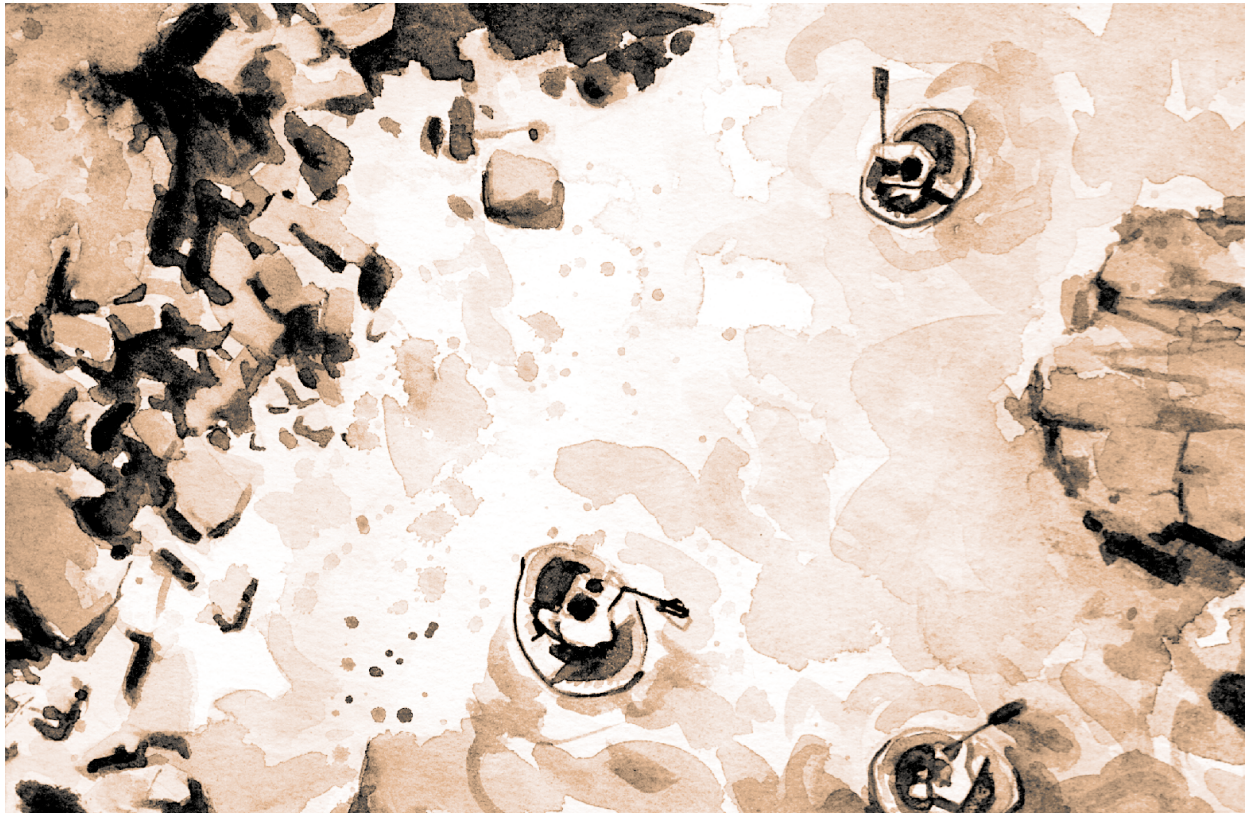
The history of Anglesey stretches back 9000 years to prehistoric times. Celts established Iron Age culture on the island and held it for a time even against Roman invaders. The Roman historian Tacitus wrote about the druids "pouring out frightful curses with their hands raised high to the heavens." This terrified most of the Romans, and many refused to fight thereafter.

By A.D. 300, the Irish replaced the Romans as masters of Anglesey, holding the island for about 100 years. Perhaps this is the time when Princess Branwen of Cymru married Matholch, king of Ireland, a story that ends in sorrow according to *The Mabinogion*; rumors abound that her kinsmen buried her on Anglesey. Vikings and the English followed the Romans. The English starved the Welsh into submission through a blockade. The castle of Beaumaris still stands as testament to Edward I's efforts to subdue the island.

On the island's coast, Dwynwen's Well is a favored site for those who doubt the fidelity of their lovers. A magic eel reportedly swims beneath the well's surface; a concerned sweetheart must sprinkle breadcrumbs on the surface of the water and cover these with a handkerchief. If the eel appears and takes the hankie, the unfortunate one knows her lover has been unfaithful.

Today, Anglesey is a gateway by sea to Ireland and still retains natural delights in its flora, fauna and numerous historical sites.





to destinations in Scotland and England as well; the London connection for North Wales is Euston Station, with Paddington Station serving South Wales.

While Wales has major airports in Cardiff, Swansea and Welshpool, most visitors choose to fly into Manchester, Birmingham or London, then catch the train or rent a car. A train journey from London to North Wales takes approximately three hours; the journey from London to Cardiff is a mere two hours. The M4 motorway provides a direct route from London to Cardiff; smaller roads such as the A487 and A470 connect Cardiff with points north.

Travel by water is also possible. The coracle, a small round boat, enjoys a great revival in Wales. Lakes and rivers host great fishing and sailing opportunities, not to mention the pleasures of miles of coastline and canals. Ferries also run several times daily from Swansea to Cork and from Holyhead to Dublin.

Coracles

Known as *gwrwgl* in Welsh, coracles have seen use since pre-Roman times. Ash or willow laths form the framework of the small boat, which is then covered in skins or thick cloth soaked in pitch or tar for waterproofing. Fisherfolk can easily carry the lightweight coracle before launching and sailing with the current. Coracle sailors use one or two paddles, depending on whether they're casting a net. Today, visitors can see Welsh coracles in use for fishing on the Rivers Teifi, Towy and Taf.

Principalities of Cymru

Of all the gin joints in all the towns in all the world, she walks into mine.

— Rick, *Casablanca*

I get all kinds here at the Table — that's officially The Table of the Twin Rivers, the best damn bar and llys in Cymru, if I do say so myself. There are the honeymoon couples who come in all starry-eyed, lost in a universe of two. Occasionally, I see students far from home, on exchange, I guess, maybe here on their own desires but more often than not because Mummy and Daddy kicked them out of the nest and sent them on a quaint little Euro-holiday. Then there's the gum-boot-wearing, Land Rover-driving, woolly sweater crowd, people who don't give a damn about Cymru's beauty and ancient history, them who just want to have something new to talk about in the country club back home. Creeps, all of 'em. Too bad they're necessary to keep this place in business.

Don't get me wrong! I like people. And I don't mind the American crowd, being half Yank myself. But I'm not getting any younger, and it's damn tiresome to see folks who just don't care about anything beyond stocks, bonds and car leases come trampling through here, day in and day out. Guess it's just grumpdom slowly closing in upon me. My buddy Derwyn keeps me cheered up with all his pooka nonsense

Trods (Sarns)

*The summer sky of the centuries bloodstained
By the heroism of the ages;
In the distance you see our old valour,
The old valour of our extinction.*

— Alan Llywd, “The Horizon Gazer”

Faerie trods once lay over Wales like gossamer webs. Now, only a few of these sarns, as the Tylwyth Teg call them, remain in use. What the wise Kithain in Cymru realize is that whoever controls the sarns in effect controls the land. If a war for rulership does occur, the sarns will become prizes to be won at any cost.

Dylan's Dance

The most powerful of all known sarns, the pathways of Dylan's Dance lead from his freehold in Dyfed to Cadair Idris in Gwynedd, Llyn Brenig in Clywd, Swansea and Gwynt's Cantrev Cymer. However, Prince Dylan only uses the trod for social occasions. His critics use this to fuel the growing belief that Dylan is a weakling, unfit to be prince of Dyfed, much less high king of Cymru.

The Pooka's Favor

This sarn stretches from Gwynt to Edinburgh, and the pooka who control it ask no price for travel from Cymru to Scotland's capitol. However, when a traveler attempts to return to Gwynt from Scotland, the return fare is expensive, at least in terms of pride. Mere money holds no interest for the pooka; they prefer pies in the face, shaved heads or nudity, depending on their mood and the personality of the traveler.

Gwyddno's Track

Only remembered in rumors and legends, entrance to a sarn of ancient power lies hidden in Powys. Last in use during the reign of King Gwyddno Garanhir, the sarn extended to all cantrevs in Cymru as well as Hibernia.

Pen Mynydd

Leading from Mount Snowdon in Cymru to Ben Nevis in Scotland, this is a secret Unseelie sluagh sarn, guarded jealously by the Scottish ban-durrag that maintain it. These foul creatures call this trod Ban-Durrag's Squirm. Gwilym the Seneschal and others at Mount Snowdon are not aware of the sarn's existence.

Cefn yr Oguf

Running from Clwyd down to London Bridge and up to Chester, this sarn is a hotly contested prize in Clwyd. At present, both Ladies of Clwyd have access to the trod, but right to its use remains one of the spoils of war exchanged in the two sidhe's long-running battle.

most days, but there are the other times where it's just an effort of will to crawl home in the mornings.

Then one hazy spring day, she walked in, and a thousand emotions whacked me right in the old gulliver.

She didn't look any different than the last time I'd seen her, back in London 20 years ago. That was in the selfish decade, a haunted time for a lot of people. In America, we had fallout from Vietnam and the presidential crisis and the oil embargo and all that. Here in Britain, there were Irish troubles and money problems and so on. Not a real happy time to be alive. But I was dancing and singing my way through life on-stage, and when I met her, the world all of a sudden bloomed roses. It turned rotten again the day she didn't show up for tea as usual. She didn't have the guts to break it off in person. She just sent that candy-coated note slathered with her scent: Evening in Paris. I haven't seen that stuff on the shelves for years and glad I've been for it.

But here she was, right now. And I felt like a recovering drunkard in a distillery.

Dainty diamond-studded ears peeked out from under her auburn tresses, as those limpid, hazel pools mere mortals deem eyes caressed me. Was she wearing clothes? If so, I didn't notice, so lost I was at the sight of her flawless café-au-lait skin. Once a spindly little eshu gazelle, a prankish childling known far and wide for her antics, she had grown every inch into a wilder of exquisite beauty, grace and sin. And then, her dulcet Algerian French tones kissed the air, making it all the more sweet.

“Hello, Nestor, you horny old bastard. It has been a long time, no?” She took a seat at the bar and without thinking, I poured her favorite drink — blueberry brandy. I hadn't tasted the stuff since we'd parted. She sipped it, cerise lips blessing every drop.

In the dim recesses of my mind, I heard the muffled snickers of my supposed pal, Derwyn, from his favorite corner table as he surveyed the scene, but his cackles became silent against the weak, yet determined ramblings of my own tongue. Other guests, both Kithain and mortal, paid little attention.

“Hello, Margaux,” I choked. “Croeso, pob hywl...uh, welcome to Cymru.” She smiled.

“Dear old Nestor. I knew you'd be glad to see me! And we have soooo much to talk about!” Her warm slender hand touched mine, and a tingle ran right down my spine into more interested territories.

“Yes, of course, I...oh, certainly, anything you...”

Margaux finished her brandy, so I quickly poured another. “I'm on a bit of a quest, you see. An employer of mine...he wants information. And you, the wisest man in Cymru, so I've heard, will you help me?” I felt fingers scratching my horns, deliciously satisfying a small portion of the itches growing within my body.

“My mentor, Tom John, is wiser than I by far,” I mumbled. “But by the songs of my ancestors, Margaux, anything to help you I will do!” Her smile was the only reward I needed.

“Ah, good! Oh dear Nestor, I knew I could rely on you! You see,” she said, voice softening, “I want to know all about Cymru...the Kithain, their treasures, the lands, the Prodigals. I want it all.” Just as I want you, said the unspoken promise in her eyes. I took that bait, hook, line and sinker.

“Well,” I began, “let me see...”

A furry hand slammed down on the bar. "Now wait a bloody minute. Nestor, are you sane! Who is this ugly wench that you'd be hiding every thing you are knowing, now?" Derwyn glowered at us both. A small, compact man, his slender frame concealed hidden strength and agility. He hopped onto the bar, his foxlike, silvery red ears wagging. "This tart trots in here and suddenly you refuse to hide your fool notions from her? Have you regained your wits or what!"

I threw him the most withering of looks. "Now, Derwyn, you're hardly being a good host! Margaux here is an old and dear friend. How can I refuse her request?"

"You can bloody well just blab 'til the cows come home instead of keeping your trap shut, that's how!" he cried.

I looked at my friend, my oathmate, my companion in the fight against both Glamorgan and the ravages of old age. Derwyn helped build the Table and spread word of it throughout Cymru, and never had I found a better chum. Then I feasted my eyes upon Margaux, recalling the romps of youth and the ardent passion of love felt in her arms. My bones still ached for her touch, and lust won out over friendship.

"Let's see," I said, pouring us a drink and blatantly ignoring the look of hurt and pain in Derwyn's big eyes, as I whacked him off the bar onto the floor. "You'll be wanting to start with the north first, I reckon." Margaux smiled and began taking notes on a scented pad as I started my tale.

The Principality of Clwyd, Land of Two Valleys

*Son of the mountain am I,
Far from home making my song;
But my heart is in the mountain
with the heather and small birds.*

— John Ceiriog Hughes, "The Mountain Stream"

Ah, the Land of Two Valleys. It's a beautiful place despite all the troubles. Mark my words now; we may well see the next bloody Kithain war begin in these hills. You asked me about the Prodigals, and I'll tell you what I know. Long ago, say the bards, a lord of Denbigh took on strange habits, as did his children and vassals. No one could swear to ever seeing this lord or his heirs face to face in the daylight. Peasants farmers reported an odd sickness among their cattle and sheep, just as mothers and fathers sometimes found their children wandering dazed and confused after getting lost past sunset. These strange legends lasted for hundreds of years, until one night, there was a terrible storm, the likes of which no mortal had seen. Rain poured from the angry skies and thunder drove many a fellow under his bed for fear. Lightning played at the horizon's edge, getting closer and closer, until finally it struck the keep and its lands. The torrents of rain hardly seemed to quench the blaze that rose up from the inner bailey, and by dawn, the keep lay in ruins. The tales dwindled. Now they are only in the memory of a few such as myself. But I have always suspected there was more than a superstitious tale at work in Denbigh.

— Nestor Evans, Seelie satyr

The Clwydian Mountains dance alongside the River Clwyd to divide this principality, but neither valley is less beautiful than the other. The River Dee in the south flows alongside the heights of Cadair Berwyn, and small lakes and moors dot the entire countryside. It is a haven for rich evergreens and not a small amount of wildlife, particularly birds. Falcons, merlins, owls and waterfowl frequent this land year-round.

The town of Llangollen rests within Clwyd's borders; this is the site of the International Eisteddfod, an event not to miss. Other urban centers include Ruthin, Wrexham and Holywell inland, with Rhyl and Colwyn Bay on the coast.

The tale of Clwyd is a sad chapter in Kithain history. Once, before their Saining 10 years past, two young girls named Gwrly and Angharad were the closest of friends. They laughed together, shared toys and ran wild and free in the hills of their homeland, exactly as two children should. Then, Gwrly began to show signs of Exigency, then a rapid Onset and entrance into the Dream Dance. She babbled, she ran amok, then fainted in poor Angharad's arms. A watcher from Prince Dylan's court in Dyfed sent word to his lord, and the prince himself journeyed to Clwyd to take matters into hand. By the time he found them, both girls were in the midst of the Dream Dance. He set guards about them until they emerged and remembered their true natures. And with this remembrance came recollection for them both of their previous lives. Suddenly, they tore into each other, ripping hair, biting and screaming. After recovering from the shock of it all, Dylan calmed everyone. Then he discovered the pitiful truth.

Many years ago, before the Shattering, Gwrly of House Liam and Angharad ferch Mynydd of House Fiona often walked the trods from Arcadia to the Land of Two Valleys, for they both loved a mortal Dreamer. His name is unknown, but this man was a harper and bard of great fame. He likewise loved both Gwrly and Angharad, and hence the trouble. He suffered terribly because he could not choose between the two, fain to break the heart of one. So one morning as the sun touched the dewdrops in the emerald fields, he drowned himself in the cold waters of the River Clwyd. Angharad found him first, and the echoes of her cries still sound through the valley on stormy days. Gwrly found out what happened soon after, but shed nary a tear nor spoke any word of her sadness. The two sidhe hated each other from that point onward, carrying their venom all those years spent trapped in Arcadia, until they crossed back over into this world and remembered the past. The Land of Two Valleys had no nobles in permanent residence, so Dylan divided Clwyd between Gwrly and Angharad, thinking the hills might serve to keep the two separated yet close enough to find their lost friendship. But it simply hasn't been enough now that they're older, wiser and more powerful.

Cantrev Gwrly

I fought in Gwrly's cantrev once upon a time. Fine place to hide, with them rocks and all. But she's a real pompous sort, too uppity for my taste. That land of hers is rugged and wild; it needs a firmer touch than hers, if you ask me.

— Ulric One-Arm, Unseelie troll mercenary



Gwrly's realm encompasses the eastern lands of Clwyd, the larger and more populous of the principality's cantrevs, but her valley is the craggier of the two. The Berwyn Mountains mark the southern borders and the River Dee the eastern boundary with England. The Countess' pride and joy is the town of Llangollen, site of the International Eisteddfod. Each spring, in anticipation of the summer event, Countess Gwrly sends engraved invitations to all nobles and notables of Cymru to join her under the cantrev's pavilion and watch the festivities in splendor. Needless to say, Gwrly invites no one of Angharad's household, though for purposes of the eisteddfod, she permits them to enter Llangollen and attend the festivities, as long as they stay at least ten paces away from her pavilion.

Caer Adern, Keep of the Birds

Countess Gwrly may be a bit aloof, but her plas (cabin) surely was a welcome sight after that battle I had with those redcap bandits! Hundreds of 'em, throwing spears, shouting curses! I got half a dozen arrows in my rump, I swear it! There was blood everywhere! And she took me in and made me right as rain. Yes, indeed, within an hour I was back out there ready to take on those bastards. Too bad they ran away before I could show them a thing or two — cowards!

— Rowena ferch Cadwyr, Unseelie pooka

Just northwest of the River Dee where the hills of Clwyd begin to rise towards the sky rests Caer Adern, the plas of Countess Gwrly. The freehold is to mortal eyes a 16th-century Tudor manor, complete with a thatched roof, cozy guest cottage and well-stocked stable. In her mortal seeming, Gwrly is a practicing

veterinarian and has her office in what was once the carriage house of the estate. Mortals and Kithain from all over Wales bring their pets to her for care. Rather than being cold, harsh and Banal, the practice is a warm and inviting place, with lots of client pictures, a big overstuffed couch and a floor to ceiling birdcage in one corner. Gwrly's assistant Jessica always has classical music playing on the stereo; she keeps up the bookkeeping and schedules in addition to serving as a veterinary technician. Jessica thinks her boss is a bit eccentric, but knows nothing of the fae. Gwrly's practice is limited to companion animals, but she'll help anyone in an emergency.

Set atop a rise, the plas allows visitors to gaze down onto the rolling green meadows and even glimpse the glittering waters of the river on clear days. A stone *llan*, like a big fence, marks the boundaries of the estate so sheep and horses may graze contentedly within the freehold's pastures. Inside the three story house are polished wood floors, oriental carpets and a bevy of simple but valuable antiques from the 16th and 17th centuries. The plas looks much the same to enchanted eyes, except that everything seems bathed in a golden glow of light. Guest rooms are plentiful and in the great room, the cheerful balefire casts warm light on Countess Gwrly and her companions. But the Countess' home pales in comparison to her gardens, for this is the refuge of her heart.

Laid out in a large knotwork pattern with hedges and paths, the gardens contain native plants and numerous herbs as well as hardy imported flowers and shrubs. A hedge maze provides entertainment (or a romantic meeting place) for guests and



residents alike. All year long, it is a place awash with both color and song, as this is the source of the plas' name. All manner of birds dwell in the gardens, from tiny finches and hummingbirds to silvery doves and noble falcons. A lily pond invites swans and geese as well. Part of the Glamour of Caer Adern is the peaceful coexistence of these creatures and the natural power Countess Gwrly seems to have over them. In her presence, they sing and call and even alight on her fingertips. Rumors whisper that in the years of dissent between Countess Gwrly and Countess Angharad, the balance between the raptors and songbirds has slowly diminished.

Llangollen (ɬlan-ɡoθ'-len)

If ever a high king or queen sits a throne in Cymru, I plan to petition for an end to Gwrly's exclusionary rights over Llangollen. 'Tis much too delightful a place for that cold harpy to determine who's fit to enter and who's not. Shouldn't we all be able to enjoy such splendid Glamour from the eisteddfod, without kissing Her Excellency's hem?

— Countess Angharad, Unseelie sidhe

Site of the largest *eisteddfod* (bardic gathering) in Wales, Llangollen is a small town resting in the Dee valley. Each year in summer, Llangollen hosts entertainers from around the world at the International Eisteddfod. The town itself is a charming blend of traditional Victorian architecture and style with a dash of continental Europe. Open-air restaurants decorate the banks of the Dee along with craft shops, bed and breakfasts, and pubs. While crowded to capacity in July, Llangollen still maintains a warm and cozy atmosphere.

Gwersyll Afon Gwyrdd (Camp Green River)

I remember the last Imbolc up at Iaian's place. I counted at least 40 people in the pool, and not all of them satyrs either! I had Countess Angharad herself sitting in my lap for a bit. Then that troll bastard Ulric had to come along. So much for the water and any chances I might've had to make a cold night a little warmer!

— Nestor Evans, Seelie satyr

Gwersyll Afon Gwyrdd is a medium sized campground just south of Llangollen. It's a favorite spot for tourists on budget holiday and inevitably turns guests away during the *eisteddfod*. Iaian Hughes, a handsome man in his late 30s, is the proprietor; moreover, he is a kinain who takes great pleasure in catering to the special needs of the Kithain. During *eisteddfod*, he sets up all manner of tents, pavilions and banners, creating spectacular venues for tournaments and entertainment. One reason the camp is so crowded during the festival is that the Kithain take up virtually all available space; few bother to stop after seeing the "No Vacancy" sign. Most mortals who do see the medieval set-up assume it's the work of a reenactment society.

In the past few years, Iaian has installed some special amenities. These include a colorful fantasy putt-putt course, with jousting knights, windmills and dragons, as well as an enormous

jacuzzi that seats about 25 people. The jacuzzi is a favorite with the satyrs who try to see just how many people they can pack in and still fool around.

Although the camp is technically within Gwrly's territory, she grudgingly allows her enemy Angharad access during eisteddfod and the seasonal festivals. The countesses have agreed that neither will go within 10 paces of the other, though their retainers may mingle as long as no hostilities occur on this neutral ground.

Eisteddfod and the Gorsedd of Bards

The eisteddfod (eye-steth'-vuhd, pl. eisteddfodau), literally meaning "a gathering," is an annual bardic competition held in the summer months. Springing from a tradition over 900 years old, today's eisteddfod is a modern-day representation of medieval competitions among bards for places in noble entourages. Then as now, contests include poetry, drama and music of all kinds. Modern eisteddfodau are elaborate celebrations with costumed rituals and large choirs of singers, including traditional bardic arts as well as writing and painting. The first eisteddfod took place at the behest of King Hywel Dda, who wished to have the finest poet in the land serve his household. His actions led to other nobles also acting as patrons to performers. A desire to regulate the system of patronage resulted in the development of a strict hierarchy of rank and status among bards by the 16th century...and ultimately the decline of noble patronage, especially in light of changing political and cultural scenes in early-modern Britain.

In 1792, however, a Welsh scholar named Iolo Morganwg created a formal bardic and druidic society, complete with rituals, degrees and regalia. This group became the Gorsedd of Bards, and today, they officially proclaim the gathering of an eisteddfod at least a year and a day in advance. The Gorsedd of Bards' ceremonies include the call of the Corn Gwald, a trumpet which brings the people together, the drawing of the Grand Sword from its sheath three times as an affirmation of peace, and the presentation to the archdruid of the Hirlas Horn of Plenty along with samples of native flowers and soils by dancing Welsh maidens.

The Royal National Eisteddfod alternates locations from the north and the south. The International Eisteddfod is a global festival that takes place in Llangollen. Crafts, art exhibitions, and sports all contribute to the flavor of these celebrations. A recent addition to the exhibits is a showcase of Welsh science and technology.

Wales has a long history of poets and bards, from An-
aurin and Taliesin in the 6th century, to Owain Cyferliog
and Dafydd ap Gwilym in the Middle Ages, to John Hughes,
John Jones, Richard Llewellyn, Dylan Thomas and Emlyn
Williams in modern times.

Cantrev Brenig

Let Angharad preen and cosset her bit of swampland, for it is worth little to me save a training ground for my warriors.

— Countess Gwrly, Seelie sidhe

This cantrev is the western portion of the Land of Two Valleys, smaller and less populated than its neighboring vale, Cantrev Gwrly. This land of Angharad's stretches from the Clwyd Mountains west toward Gwynedd and north to the coast of the Irish Sea. The southern boundary falls where the River Clwyd turns north towards Llyn Brenig. This tiny bit of land in the south along with certain territories near the River Dee are hotly disputed territories. More than once, the loyal retainers of Clwyd's two ladies have come to blows on the lonely plains near the banks of the Dee.

Caer Brenig

Aye, lassie, I've been there. I even managed to snatch a few of those pretty trinkets Countess Angharad's slaves, oops, I mean crafters churn out in her sweatshop. If you ask me, that girl has a hankerin' for some real action. You know what they say about those Victorian types; underneath all that lace getup they're hot-blooded creatures. Angharad to my mind is no exception.

— McGowan, Seelie redcap

In her mortal seeming, Countess Angharad has reputation as a historical restorationist. While she restores all periods, her specialty is 19th-century recreations. Countess Angharad's home possesses a Victorian splendence. Just north of Llyn Brenig, from whence she chose the name of her cantrev and keep, rests her Victorian country home. Everything in the plas is silk or velvet, rose pink or cornflower blue. Fanciful scrollwork and ornate brass handles cover the bureaux and escritoirs, and quaint knickknacks and bric-a-brac give the home a pleasant clutter. All the beds are four-posters hung with Venetian lace and mosquito netting, while scents of fresh-cut flowers and potpourri waft through the rooms. Hundreds of rare books fill her library, most of them bound in leather, just like the walls. Instead of one large balefire, Countess Angharad has "balefire by gaslight." Glamour flows throughout the house to appear as soft flames in small enamel wall sconces. The source is a big porcelain boiler in the basement, presumed to be nocker handiwork. The eyes of Kithain can also observe several chimeric creatures the countess keeps as pets: an enfield, an ermine and even a small green dragon. They lurk in the corners to scare guests and keep their mistress entertained.

Angharad has a small workshop on the grounds of her home called "Victoria's Reticule." Here she employs three enchanted mortal brothers, John, Owen and Cary Pritchard. Their handiwork rivals that of nockers; they specialize in Christmas ornaments, blown glass, lamps and jewelry but can usually reconstruct any piece of period furniture given time. The shop is open to tourists and brings in quite a tidy sum.

The grounds of the plas are simple but well-manicured. Lawn tennis, badminton and croquet rank high on Countess Angharad's list of pleasures, and facilities for play exist year round. And while few birds grace the plas, a fat, good-natured cat always lies around in a spot of sunshine on the premises.



Moel Arthur

Oh, yes, I saw her one dark night. She wore this old tattered white dress and howled up at the wind. Then she gave me three peas that turned into big gold pieces at dawn. Too bad I can't show them to you; I spent them on a good bunch of carrots long ago.

— Derwyn ap Allyn, Seelie pooka

An unmarked grave at the base of the Moel Arthur hill in the Principality of Clwyd contains the bones of some unknown hero, along with an iron-bound chest of treasure. Locals speculate this may be the resting place of Boudicca or even Arthur himself. Many have reported seeing a gray lady appear in moonlight or during fierce storms; one man even told a tale of receiving peas from the mysterious woman that turned to gold at dawn.

The Iron Stag

If you're looking for nasty work, the Iron Stag's the place to be. But watch your back; the tart that runs the place would just as soon rip out your heart as pour a decent stout.

— Ulric One-Arm, Unseelie troll

The city of Wrexham is home to the Iron Stag pub, a normal enough looking place on the outside. Inside, however, is a haven for some rough characters.

Built of rough stone, the dimly lit pub has hardwood floors and battered wood benches and tables. Glasses hang from a rack over the long oak bar, well within reach of the tall, ebon-haired proprietress, Edie Davis. The pub serves a variety of drinks and light snacks from mid-afternoon far into the night, when some darker business deals are made.

Edie and her stocky partner Hugh Calhoun are not what they seem. She is a Fianna Philodox, a member of the Brotherhood of Herne. Hugh is an Unseelie nocker with talent for building bombs and custom weapons in his basement workshop. Edie uses the pub as a meeting place for terrorists while Hugh provides expensive but extraordinary hardware at reasonable prices. In the past, Edie brokered a number of deals that led to bloodshed in England and Ireland; her most recent clients included some eco-terrorists from Scotland. She and Hugh care more for profit and adventure rather than causes. These two have made a number of enemies over the years. The Welsh Fianna generally turn a blind eye to Edie's activities, including her ongoing affair with Hugh. However, should Countess Gwrly find out about Hugh, his punishment would be prolonged and terrible.

The Principality of Gwynedd, Land of Mountains and Meadows

*Gaily they grow, the quiet throng,
fair gems of the realm of sun and wind,
the hanging bells of the high crags,
flowers of the rocks,
like cups of honey.*

— Eifion Wyn, “Heather Flowers”

Overall, Gwynedd remains rough and unsettled, sort of a frontier principality, you might say. Like most of Cymru, it’s magnificently beautiful; what it needs are gentle and caring hands to guide it to the destiny it deserves.

— Nestor Evans, Seelie satyr

The snow-capped peaks of the Snowdonia Range inevitably draw eyes upward, and visitors may at first fail to see the loveliness of the gentle hills and vales that fall in grassy waves around the charming little towns and villages. But eventually, they will cast their gaze with pleasure on the clear rivers flowing over ancient stones and under romantic bridges watering endless flowered fields.

The principality’s eastern border runs parallel to the Conwy River and the River Dee in the northeast, while the sweep of the Cambrian Mountains and the River Dyfi mark the southeastern and southern borders. The waters of Cardigan Bay, Caernarfon Bay and the Irish Sea wash counterclockwise on Gwynedd’s shores to form the principality’s boundaries on the west and north. The Lleyl Peninsula and the Isle of Anglesey extend far out into these waters to provide a rich coastline for walking, fishing or sailing. Coastal towns such as Conwy, Bangor, Caernarfon, Tywyn and Llandudno serve as popular resorts for any who love the sea and surf while smaller towns, such as Betws-y-coed, Ysbytylfan, Ffestiniog, Dolgellau and Llanberis nestle deeper within the mountains and meadows. Gwynedd is also home to several enticing waterfalls and lakes, such as Swallow Falls on the Conwy River, Llyn Tegid and Llyn Celyn.

The mountains, however, remain the chief attraction. Carnedd Llewellyn ascends just over 1000 ft near Llanberis, northeast of the shadows of Mount Snowdon, the tallest peak in Cymru. To the south, Cadair Idris glowers down upon Gwynedd, the Snowdonian Range joining the larger chain of Cambrian Mountains to form some of the oldest highlands in Britain.

No single Kithain rules Gwynedd today. The Cantrev of Snowdonia has two separate holdings: Mount Snowdon and Cwm Pwca, each in the hands of commoners. The residents at the two holdings each has his own agendas and while on friendly terms with each other and most Kithain of Cymru, they don’t fraternize. If someone has to make a decision, most Kithain in the Land of Mountains and Meadows look to Gwilym the Seneschal.

What the people of Gwynedd really want is a return to the glory-days of Powys; most everyone in Gwynedd traces their roots to that lost land. When Powys fell, everyone who managed to survive the deluge fled to Gwynedd, hoping to regroup; unfortunately, this didn’t happen. Perhaps they’d lost too much hope or couldn’t go on without their king. This was a time of terrible despair, the likes of which modern fae had ever seen. The closest thing the Kithain of Gwynedd have to any kind of guidance is from the seneschals of Snowdonia, who managed to endure through the Shattering, always choosing and training their successors well ahead of time. The current seneschal, Gwilym, hopes that a new high king or queen might appear in his lifetime, but prospects don’t look good.

The Cantrev of Snowdonia

I daresay things will get worse before they get better for us here in Snowdonia. But the common thread that binds us together is the memory of how majestic Cymru was long ago. This thread must keep winding amongst the people here and in the other principalities as well, so that someday, someone can achieve what I could not — a land united with wisdom and hope.

— Gwilym the Seneschal, Seelie boggan

Snowdonia is a rugged and lonely land. Years ago, the Land of Mountains and Meadows fell under the jurisdiction of High King Gwyddno Garanhir, who set a much loved tradition of appointing a commoner to oversee the cantrev, thus creating the office of seneschal of Snowdonia. When Powys fell, the seneschal of Snowdonia was a nocker by the name of Yvana ferch Dewys. She led survivors from the flooded plains of Powys north to Mount Snowdon. Yvana spent the rest of her life getting the survivors settled, as did her successor; thus, the office of seneschal more or less turned into one of administration rather than creating and rebuilding Powys.

Cantrev Snowdonia proper stretches along the mountain tops from Carnedd Llewellyn in the north to Cadair Idris in the south; the valleys below, however, mark the beginning of free territory in Gwynedd that the Kithain don’t necessarily claim. This area to humans is, after all, a national park. The pooka, however, conveniently ignore this fact.

Mount Snowdon

I first visited Mount Snowdon when I was a young goat, newly Sained. The entrance to this glade is an almost invisible cleft high in the rocks any mortal would walk past with hardly a second glance. But the cleft opens for Kithain, and set along the stone inside are carved stairs spiraling down to a realm of crystal splendor. The balefire here takes a strange form, that of a frozen waterfall that never melts; since any can remember, the cascade drips steadily into a tiny pool with water so pure and full of Glamour that some have sworn they see shadowy images of Arcadia in its reflection. The stone walls bear no decorations, and little furniture livens the eyrie; a few trolls lugged in rocks for tables, and most people just sit around on the floor. The freehold is probably less than a thousand square feet, but the ceiling rises high above all to make it seem much, much larger. So Mount Snowdon gets my vote for the most naturally beautiful freehold in Cymru.

— Nestor Evans, Seelie satyr

Mount Snowdon's icy summit bejewels the crown of Snowdonia. The Welsh call it Yr Wyddfa Fawr, which means "the great tomb." Old stories, maybe even older than the Dreaming, tell about a sleeping giant who rests deep beneath the earth. Some say the giant is an evil demon who killed great kings and clothed himself in their beards. Others write that somewhere on the mountain is a great bell that will awaken King Arthur's sleeping warriors who rest under the hill. Finally, rumors circulate that Arthur himself rests near Bwlch-y-Saetheu, the Pass of Arrows, not too far from the summit.



Yr Wyddfa Fawr is a strange place; sometimes, the dross of the pool does bizarre things, far beyond the wild and unpredictable nature of Glamour. What certain Tylwyth Teg report is that sorcery using dross from Mount Snowdon sometimes grows impossibly powerful, rather than just fizzling or going haywire. Nestor Evans spins a tale about the troll Ulric One-Horn getting drunk on mead while at Mount Snowdon. The troll started picking on the redcap McGowan, and before anybody could intervene, the two were in a scuffle, rolling around, punching, biting and gouging. Gwilym finally got the two pulled apart and set about repairing everyone's injuries. The seneschal is famous for his healing salves, and so he drew some water from the pool, stirred up his salve and smeared it all over the casualties. And something amazing happened; in addition to their wounds healing, the troll and redcap lost about five years of age! Gwilym tried over and over to figure out what he'd done, to no avail. By no means is this the strangest tale about the Glamour of Mount Snowdon, but it is perhaps the most famous.

The Secret Pool of Yr Wyddfa Fawr

Yr Wyddfa Fawr, Mount Snowdon, is far more than even the wise Nestor Evans suspects. The mountain's source of Glamour is a small, flat stone resting at the top of the waterfall; not only is this a hard spot to reach, the stone seems so ordinary, few would recognize its powers. And to complicate matters further, the waterfall's pool rests upon a powerful Node, so that each cup of water carries within its drops not only Glamour but also Quintessence. Thus, Yr Wyddfa Fawr is not only the most beautiful freehold in Cymru, but the most powerful as well.

The secret of Mount Snowdon's hidden stone rests only in the minds of the seneschals of Snowdonia, passed along from old master or mistress to young successor. Gwilym is thus the only Kithain in Cymru who knows the truth...though a few such as Tom John and Nestor might have suspicions. Gwilym is of two minds regarding the glen. He needs trusted Kithain such as Nestor or even Ulric and McGowan around to help him keep an eye on things; thus he welcomes most Welsh fae to the mountain, albeit cautiously. On the other hand, he knows that should someone guess the true nature of the glyn (the Tylwyth Teg's term for glade) and try to seize and misuse its powers, all Cymru will suffer. Thus Gwilym's desperation to find a high king who can guard and nurture the glyn is quite justified.





Lovespoons, Wise Musings and Leeks

Lovespoons are the traditional Welsh betrothal gift of a gentleman to his ladylove. The man carves the spoon from a single block of wood with elaborate knotwork, key patterns, hearts or whatever he imagines his lady might fancy. Lovespoons vary in size and complexity from delicate pieces that fit in the palm of a hand to those more than a foot in length. Common symbols in lovespoon designs include diamonds (for good fortune), dragons (for protection), keys (for security), knots (for everlasting love) and ships (for good passage through life). The married couple usually hangs the spoon over their hearth as a symbol of the unity in their house.

Many bits of wisdom and homilies punctuate the Welsh language. *Triads* are common wise sayings and bits of advice. As the name implies, they create metaphors or similes using three items for comparison. "Three cold things of the world: A greyhound's nose, a marble pot and a miser's hearth" is an example. *Penllion* are popular verses, usually short and with a simple meter, that convey some sort of emotion or feeling. *Englyn* more closely resemble epigrams or epitaphs, usually one line with a slightly more complicated meter than penllion. While most such adages date from the 18th and 19th centuries, the styles and ideas behind them linger from ancient times.

Finally, no discussion of Wales would be complete without mention of the leek. This noisome vegetable boasts many tales; traditionally, it was a mainstay of the Welsh diet. Under leadership of St. David, soldiers wore them as crests on helms, and this habit continued during the Battle of Agincourt and the rulership of the Tudor monarchy.

Betws-y-coed (bay-tess-ee-coh'-ed)

I can't think of anything more fun than to sit in the old graveyard in Betws-y-Coed late at night and scare people coming out of the pub. Last year, I scared someone so bad they ran off and fell in the river! Nothing will ever top that.

— Bronwen Jones, Unseelie sluagh

The picturesque town of Betws-y-coed sits astride the Conwy River and serves as a major center for display of fine Welsh crafts, including lovespoons, woolens and pottery. Kithain adore the town for its abundance of Dreamers among the craft folk. Only about 900 people live here, but Betws-y-coed prospers from tourism. The town has a number of Victorian inns and shops, with two old churches and a footbridge across the River Conwy. Several sheep farms form the town's perimeter, and the view from almost any point is spectacular, highlighting the surrounding mountains. Swallow Falls is a pleasant hike north of Betws-y-coed and has a splendid river overlook.

Pentref Crafts

Last week when I was down Betws-y-coed way, I saw this sidhe buying a couple of lovespoons at Pentref Crafts. Now, I couldn't swear to it, but he had this way about him that reminded me of those fops at King Ross' court. First, flowers, now lovespoons. I smell trouble.

— McGowan, Seelie redcap

Near the center of Betws-y-coed is one of the largest and finest centers of craftsmanship in north Wales. Pentref Crafts is a two-story stone and slate building from the late 1800s that has both merchandise and demonstrations of weaving, carving and pottery. The store operates as a collective, with members paying a modest annual fee and working part-time as cashiers. Several of the local Kithain, including Gwilym and Rowena ferch Cadwyr, sponsor the younger artisans by paying their annual fees. At least once per year, usually in the spring, Pentref Crafts has an opening party exhibiting new works, gearing everyone up for the summer tourist season. Kithain from all over Cymru look forward to this celebration of their country's culture.

Penmachno Pony Trekking Club

Since Da is usually busy up at the mountain, and my two married sisters live down south, I've had to take on a lot of responsibility here at the farm. I don't mind at all; I love the ponies, and I enjoy taking people out on the land. But I am getting a little tired of what I assume must be pooka coming in and dyeing the ponies tails purple and red. It takes forever to clean up!

— Susan Pugh, daughter of Gwilym the Seneschal

Just a few miles south of Betws-y-coed is the tiny village of Penmachno, right in the heart of the Snowdonian Mountains. The road to Penmachno has sharp turns and stunning overlooks into the valley below. Gwilym Pugh has his home and pony trekking club just outside the village on about 70 acres of land. The house and barn are stone, built around the turn of the century, but they have all the modern amenities. About 15 well-trained ponies of varying sizes live in the stable; most are for trail riding, but a few are trained for dressage and hunting. Gwilym's youngest daughter, Susan, is still in school and often helps her father with the animals and rentals. Riders can rent ponies hourly or for overnight trips up into the mountains.

Susan knows about her father's fae nature and is sad that she seems to be completely "normal." She would do anything to be "special," not realizing her father takes tremendous pride in her just the way she is.

Caernarfon

When things get boring at home, it's easy to cross the strait and find a good time in Caernarfon. Beware of storms, though; the waters can get dangerous.

— Sian Rowlands, Rheibes ferch Llandona

Within sight of Anglesey, the coastal town of Caernarfon has long dominated the northwest corner of Wales. In Roman times, it contained the fortress of Segontium; in medieval times, it served as an administrative center for Edward I and his succes-

sors. Caernarfon sits in a strategic position on the banks of the Menai Strait, where waters pour into Caernarfon Bay. The town also has a long industrial history in slate mining; slate from near Caernarfon once had reputé worldwide. The Inigo Jones Mine just outside the city still remains open for display and sales to visitors.

Caernarfon Castle

The best part of my trip to Cymru was Caernarfon Castle. Something about the history and majesty of the place moved me tremendously.

— Sir Durojaiye Imambe, Seelie sidhe

This impressive castle, built in 1238, dominates Caernarfon proper. Throughout the Middle Ages, it functioned as the seat of English government in Wales, and still remains the traditional coronation site of the Prince of Wales. Over 500 million viewers watched the grand pageantry in July 1969 as the current prince of Wales officially received his estate. Red sandstone, a deliberate imitation of the walls of Constantinople, joins with the rising cliffs to form the castle's base. Some sidhe and nobles view Caernarfon as a site of pilgrimage, believing the dates of the prince's coronation and the Resurgence to be no coincidence.

Carreg-y-Gulch

Carreg-y-Gulch? Nope, never heard of it.

— Derwyn ap Allyn, Seelie pooka

Whether pooka joke or satyr legend, a number of "magic" goats supposedly live in these caves in the South Snowdonian range. They lure mortals into the darkness with promises of gold. In the morning, after a night of drunken debauchery, the unfortunate victims are butted out penniless. Of course, no evidence supports these wild tales.

A Note to Margaux From Derwyn

I don't think you'll find this, since I'm sticking it in your lavender-scented silk nightie, right underneath the whips and handcuffs. I just want to let you know I think you're the nicest eshu I've ever met, and I'd trust you with my life. I think you really care about Nestor and have his best interests at heart. I know what your game is, and you better believe that if you don't goof up, we won't be waiting to get you. Please, please, just come mess with us of Cwm Twca. I beg you! Because we'll show you the time of your life.

*Love always,
Derwyn*



Cwm Pwca

If Derwyn hadn't trotted off in such a huff, I'd let him tell you about Cwm Pwca, the Pooka Valley, somewhere in the Vale of Conwy. I've never been there, and I'm not sure I want to go, either. But for pooka, I guess it's a real paradise.

— Nestor Evans, Seelie satyr

The pooka of Wales have formed a loose alliance and have a hidden meeting place in the forests of south Gwynedd; they use the term Cwm Pwca to refer both to their motley and their hideaway. Any pooka in Cymru, visitor or native, is an honorary member, though some are more active than others. The pooka particularly enjoy all the tourists who come to the Conwy Vale; these hapless victims provide an endless series of targets for jokes. Some pooka go to such extremes as making up fancy full-color brochures advertising hiking trails to lure off the unsuspecting into sheep pastures during breeding season and so on. Most of these pranks are pretty amusing, but a few turn sour. Children have become lost after dark due to a few Unseelie antics, and no one finds such tricks entertaining in the end.

Cadair Idris

Spend the night on Cadair Idris? No, thank you! I have no desire to be a poet, much less become madder than I already am.

— Ashlon Rowansong, Rheibes ferch Llandona

This rock-covered hill rises above the pastures of southern Gwynedd. An old legend whispers that anyone who sleeps for

a night in the mists of this craggy mountain will awake at dawn either a poet or a madman. Scholars among both the Kithain and the Rheibau ferch Llandona suspect Cadair Idris may be haunted

Bryn Celyn

I heard about this place from a mortal, actually. He was a young guy, maybe late teens, and came in here one night with a tall tale about getting lost in a holly grove and being scratched up by all the sharp leaves. Making his way out, he ran into this beautiful dame who's all green. After a few drinks, the young fellow got more talkative, and unless I miss my guess, I think this wily female might have had her way with him. He didn't seem the worse for wear, but just the same I put him up for the night. Next morning, he remembered nothing of his roll in the holly.

— Nestor Evans, Seelie satyr

Bryn Celyn means "hill of holly" in Welsh, and that's exactly how this eyrie appears to mortal eyes. Bryn Celyn lies a few miles east of Ffestiniog, well off the beaten path. The hidden holly grove is home to a reclusive ghille dhu named Celyndra Rhys. In her mortal seeming, the ghille dhu runs an independent farm closeby, but she generally prefers her solitude. However, when someone stumbles into her grove, she usually enchants and seduces them, purely for her own amusement. The grove itself bursts with magnificent berried holly bushes, but is otherwise not unusual in appearance. Celyndra's farm is also plain and simple; she keeps a few goats, sheep and hens, and is largely self-sufficient with a steady supply of milk and eggs, and vegetables from the garden.

A very few Kithain know of Bryn Celyn and its elusive mistress. If properly paid, Celyndra is a seer of some ability, although she is sometimes inclined to keep whole truths to herself.

Llandona

From the Missives of Margaux de Desiree:

My Dearest Lord Aegil,

Thank you so much for the fresh peaches and lovely boiled nuts; they were quite nice. I hope all is well in the Kingdom of Concordia.

As far as my business here, I have news both good and bad. That old goat Nestor battened his hatches tight on the subject of mages, and I do not doubt that wretched fox Derwyn had something to do with it; one minute, the satyr's tongue seemed tireless and the next, he launched into a discussion of the Land of the Seas and Prince Dylan of Dyfed. Damn that Derwyn! I remember the scene clearly now. And I thought he smashed all those teacups in some fit of anger. He's so dreadfully trite and acts like most pooka, stupid and tongue-twisted. But fear not, for I believe sooner or later, Nestor will reveal something of the treasures I know he has seen in his travels.

Before Glamour squelched the satyr's tongue, he gave me an old scroll from the pen of one Bethany ferch Madoc. It tells a bit about the Rheibau ferch Llandona, a sort of coven near Anglesey; I have attached a copy for your reading pleasure. Pencil on the back was the name and phone number of a woman in Bangor, and when I casually mentioned this to Nestor later, he mumbled something about her being a "witch." So I promptly took the train north the next day and rang her up. This woman, Ashlon Rowansong, met me at a pub, where we sat outside and conversed in private. Rowansong looked like a character straight from *The Wicker Man*, dressed in thin, gauzy garments, wearing a wreath of herbs in her long dark hair. I noticed she ate only bread, cheese and wine. I've never seen so many squirrels begging for scraps; there must have been a dozen chattering around her. The text Nestor gave me explained something about the history of Llandona, but I wanted to know what was going on in the here and now. So after we had exchanged pleasantries, that's exactly what I asked. Rowansong pondered my questions carefully before answering.

"I see you are not what you seem, faerie woman," she said slowly, "but I am not loathe to answer your question. If you know anything of Llandona, you know that the blood of the fae flows within our veins just as it does yours. How did you come to call upon me?"

I felt my tongue speak a quick reply. "Nestor Evans, who lives in the south, gave me your name. He told me you could answer questions left unaddressed in Bethany ferch Madoc's scroll," I said.

She held out her hand. "First, give me the scroll; then I will tell you what is needful," she said. I pulled the scroll tube out of my shoulder bag. She took it reverently, closing her eyes, savoring the scent of old parchment as she opened the bindings. That the parchment was magical I have no doubt; how else could it remain fresh and unblemished so many years?

"Thank you for returning this," she said in a soft tone. "Tell Nestor Evans this is my price for giving you aid." I started to protest, then fell silent. Let Nestor worry about that! After all, a bargain's a bargain, or so it seemed at the time. In retrospect, I regret returning the scroll and wonder why I did so. But back to my tale.

"So..." she continued, "you wish to know what has become of us since Cunedda ap Cythan took Llandona's maidenhead?" I nodded eagerly. "Then I shall give you more tales." She took a long draught of her wine.

"The six daughters of Llandona and Cunedda indeed wedded with men of the Wyck from the Isle of the Mighty, as well as a few fae of the other world and even mages from Eire, the Holy Roman Empire and the Levant. And their daughters did likewise, and so on and so on. But rarely did one of Llandona's blood birth a son, even after many generations. After a time, the fae no longer came to us, and much of their lore faded from our memories. The blood of mortal men became the anchor that renewed and sustained us. Today, these mages prefer the term "mages," taking such names as Hermetics or Cultists of Ecstasy. But we called them Sons of House Merinita or Seers of Chronos. The last of the Roman conquerors dubbed the men and women of the Wyck "Verbena," and when pressed, we chose to ally ourselves with them in modern times."

"Today, we live simply and happily, most of us in northern Wales, yet I daresay Llandona's descendants practice their ways in many parts of the world. We take pride in our gardens, our homes and children and lovers, our renewal of the ancient blood of Llandona, and the thread of life that connects everything in this universe and all others. The turning of seasons remains a special time for us; the changes bring endings and beginnings, birth and death, heat and frost. We celebrate the old holidays of Beltaine, Lughnasad, Samhain and Imbolc in honor of our ancestors. And yes, our daughters still remain choosy about their mates! Even in this modern age, suitors must be of certain standing and skill to court us. One mystery we do not understand, though, is how some of your folk seem to have returned and yet dwell in secret, apart from we who are your distant kin." She tilted her head and said, "Perhaps you can bear word to your relations that we would not oppose rebirthing our venerable ties with the fair folk."

And that, my lord, is where she left off. The next thing I recall, I sat alone at the table except for a few pestering squirrels, trying to make sense of her comments. That this lady was a woman of power, I do not doubt. Whether she guessed my true intentions, I cannot say. So, I remain

Your loving demoiselle provocateur,
Margaux de Desiree of The Hallows

Llandona Coven

A loosely organized Chantry of willworkers from northern Wales, the roots of Llandona Coven span back to ancient history. The Verbena Rheibau ferch Llandona comprise the vast majority of members, though from time to time it plays host to Hermetic mages, Cultists of Ecstasy or the occasional Celestial Chorister on pilgrimage. Some of these Tradition mages come to Llandona in hopes of making alliances with the Rheibau ferch Llandona, even through marriage as it has occurred in centuries past. Members of the Coven consider themselves to be a Hereditary Chantry, keeping a culture of ancient ways alive for generations of their blood yet unborn. Members generally dwell within a few hours drive. Those Coven members who have children nearly always bring them along, as the Rheibau ferch Llandona regard these wee ones as welcome family members and the hope of the future.

Paradigms

In the culture of Wales, the beliefs of the rural populace have great power. Welsh folk magic covers a wide breadth of abilities, including conjuring, charming, summoning and divination.

Willworkers in this land rely heavily on these superstitions and convictions to avoid Paradox. To put it simply, as long as True Magick imitates the rustic beliefs of “folk magic,” it is coincidental.

The Rheibau ferch Llandona hold some respect for the Sleeper “witches” who live in scattered pockets across Wales, even though these folk are rarely Awakened or even practitioners of hedge magic. Periodically, a member of Llandona Coven will visit one of the witches, many of whom refer to themselves as *Dynion Hysbys*, properly translated as “wizards.” The Rheibau ferch Llandona will then use True Magick to alter one of the witches’ potions or “spells” so that it may have a “real” effect. This assures that the local population accepts small degrees of the supernatural as within the realms of possibility.

The outskirts of Niwbwrch, a small village on Anglesey’s coast, house the Coven’s grove and entrance to their Horizon Realm. Amrys Gwent, a Coven member, owns the grove and a few small cottages nearby; she uses these as lodging places for Rheibau ferch Llandona in need, or visiting allied willworkers. The grove itself is on a small rise above the waters of Caernarfon Bay and the Menai Strait between Gwynedd and Anglesey. While small trees grow on the slopes of the seashore, they do not extend up into the grove; instead, thrift, sea champion, bird’s foot trefoil and kidney vetch, flower over the rough ridges of the Coven’s most sacred meadow. A rare variety of crows called choughs sometimes call out as they fly overhead looking for purchase on the cliffsides, along with more common guillemots, kittiwakes and peregrine falcons.

The Horizon Realm’s entrance is through a hidden door in the cottage closest to the grove, where many of the Coven members also store their cauldrons and magical implements. Amrys or her children or apprentices always remain nearby. The realm itself appears much like the grove in static reality, complete with calls of birds and scents of flowers. However, a single perfect rowan tree, their world tree, rises from the grove’s center, its ever-blooming silver leaves bear Quintessence within their veins. The sky always remains dark yet full of bright stars and a full moon; the Realm does not extend beyond a slight downward slope from the edges of the grove.

The Principality of Dyfed, Land of Seas and Shores

Cymru’s most famous breed of canine, the corgi, hails from Dyfed. They’re sturdy little dogs who love herding more than anything...sheep, cows, goats, kids, you name it, they’ll herd it. The Pembrokeshire variety

has no tail and is a younger breed than the Cardigan Welsh corgi. Damn cute little things, Prince Dylan has a passle of them running all over his freehold. One of them tried to herd me last time I visited. We had some words, that dog and I, but finally came to an understanding a few biscuits later. I’ve heard stories that local redcaps like to use them in punting contests, though.

— Nestor Evans, Seelie satyr

Dyfed, Land of Seas and Shores, displays the most varied countryside of any principality in Cymru; what’s more, it’s the largest. The Pembrokeshire National Park is a site not to miss; this is the only coastal national park in all of Britain, with miles of untouched sandy beaches. Only a few major cities stand in Dyfed: Aberystwyth in north Dyfed, Hwlfordd in the west, Swansea in the south and Caerfyrddin with its deep blue bay in the southeast. Aside from the coast, Dyfed’s other treasures are its twin rivers, the Taf and Tywi. And in addition to all these amenities are rich farmlands, coastal plains and wildlife preserves.

While Cardigan Bay and the Bristol Channel mark Dyfed’s western and southern borders respectively, the River Dyfi separates the Land of Seas and Shores from Gwynedd in the north. The Cambrian Mountains divide the principality from Powys in the northeast and Glamorgan in the southeast. Some fear these peaks are not enough to keep out the Dauntain of Glamorgan forever; it’s likely only a matter of time before Morgenstern starts stalking the Pembrokeshire coast for his next Banal scheme.

Unlike every other principality in Cymru, Dyfed has no cantrevs, but it does have a single ruler, Prince Dylan ap Morgan. While most people respect Prince Dylan, many also see him as limp and indecisive, especially in his reluctance to take the throne of high king of Cymru. What no one knows is that the ghille dhu Celyndra Rhys of Bryn Celyn warned Dylan that all Cymru would fall should he seek the kingship. He has long carried this secret and still struggles with himself over the truth of her prophecy.

Swansea

My favorite part of the year has to be the Victorian Festival in Mumbles, just west of Swansea. A night of raw oysters, then tête-à-têtes all day. How I wish it could be June every month!

— Countess Angharad, Unseelie sidhe

Home to the famous poet Dylan Thomas and known as the City of Literature, Swansea serves as a major center for theatre, music and a thriving maritime industry in south Wales. The city lies on the coast along the Bristol Channel, just west of the River Loughor. The Maritime Quarter is a showplace for Wales’ naval history, modern yachts and water sports; it’s also full of excellent seafood restaurants and first-class shopping.

Swansea is the major city of the Gower Peninsula, a region loaded with old stone cairns, forests and miles of pristine coasts. Clyne Gardens is also a spot of beauty, particularly in May, when flowers are in full bloom. Close to Swansea is the village of Mumbles, which has a well-attended Victorian Festival each June. Countess Angharad of Clwyd and her entourage always attend as the honored guests of Prince Dylan.

Black Pill Bikes

When I'm in a festerin' mood, I like nothing better than to get me a bike from down in Black Pill and ride the Swansea Bike Path. It goes right along the coast, so you get a grand view of the scanty clad lasses as well as the chance to run over some of those damn little corgis.

— McGowan, Seelie redcap

After the closing of the Llywn Llwydd mines, a few nockers decided to try and make a go of things elsewhere. They settled in the small village of Black Pill, southwest of Swansea and north of Mumbles, and built a bike shop in the early 1990s. Now Black Pill Bikes thrives on rentals and sales. All the bikes are of good manufacture in perfect repair; furthermore, due to the enchantments of the crafters, bikes that are forgotten and left on the beaches or bike paths return themselves! The shop owners also have a reputation for excellent customer service; they take time to show youngsters how to ride without training wheels and always reserve their tandem bikes for couples in love. Business is especially good in the spring and summer, when the rides along the Swansea Bike Path from Mumbles to central Swansea highlight the sparkling bay. The shop itself is small and junky, but there's a park with benches for customers to enjoy while they wait.

STRASSER BIERGARTEN

I keep meaning to go back to this brew pub outside of Swansea; something about the ale there is remarkable. I've even had dreams about it. I was fighting off my Viking ancestors amidst heaps of blood and entrails just to get the stuff. Packs quite a wallop, I'd say!

— Ulric One-Arm, Unseelie troll

Just a few miles northwest of Swansea, bordering the Llanrhidian Sands and a large area of salt marshes, is the town of Llanelli. Llanelli is home to a wildfowl and wetlands center, as well as a large German-style pub, the Strasser Biergarten. Long wooden benches and tables fill the lantern-lit patio under a striped awning. Customers order their food and drinks inside the simple wattle and stone hut that serves as a kitchen, but barmaids circulate for refills in the busy summer season. A big man from Bavaria named Walther Voight owns the place. He churns out both the brews and the best soft pretzels in Wales. His wife Irma and daughters Else and Berta do most of the cooking and cleaning. Portions are generous and reasonably priced, and customers always come back for more.

This isn't surprising. Walther is in fact a low-level Ferectoi, a Fomori Larva of the Wyrn (see **Book of the Wyrn** and **Freak Legion**). His home brews and pretzels use a tainted yeast that is both moderately addictive and euphoric, until it wears off and leaves a person totally useless for at least 12 hours. Most victims chalk up their hangovers to jet lag or overindulgence; meanwhile, Walther gladly keeps doling out his tainted brew and pulling in heaps of cash. Thus far, his family doesn't suspect his foul nature, but it's probably only a matter of time before something really awful happens to them.

The Unfinished Page

If you're ever in need of a rare book, I must say this place even beats London!

— Sir Mortimer Evans, Harbinger of Avalon

Rhys Law is the owner and shopkeeper at the Unfinished Page, a small but fully stocked bookstore in central Carmarthen, northwest of Swansea on the Tywi River. His reputation is impeccable: Rhys has never failed to locate a particular item for any client. Part of his "luck" is a connection with the Arcanum in England. He knows nothing of the mages or fae in Wales, as they know nothing of his more secret activities. Rhys is currently writing a lengthy volume on magical legends in Wales, not realizing that he has shaken hands with living, breathing mages and faeries. Scrupulously clean and organized, the store has two floors of floor-to-ceiling shelves and a glass display case for valuable items. Rhys lives in the third-story attic and is willing to keep odd hours for his customers.

Dinas Cleddau

The Prince has a small staff at his place, but they're all extraordinarily well-trained. I've never been there without them treating me like royalty. What's lacking, though, is the touch of a fine lady. I wish Prince Dylan, who really tries his best at being a good ruler, could find some fair one who could make him happy...and maybe encourage him to be less limp and take a little more initiative in Cymru's affairs as a whole.

— Nestor Evans, Seelie satyr

Outside the small town of Cemaes Head sits Dinas Cleddau, Prince Dylan's *pentre* (manor). The prince in his mortal seeming is a marine biologist, specializing in fish reproduction, and his home reflects his passion for the sea. The *pentre* sits just a few hundred feet off the shore, and a small inlet flows from the sea right into the front garden. Outside, the *pentre* looks like a large, whitewashed seaside cottage. Inside is surprisingly modern; the decor contains vaulted ceilings, light wood floors, exposed beams and stained glass, mostly in blues and greens. To the Kithain, the wood surfaces ripple with life, covered with ornate carvings of sea life. The stained glass windows also shift and move with the waxing or waning light. The balefire proper burns in a small fireplace in the dining room, behind a jeweled screen, guarded at all times by a pair of knights from House Gwydion; chimeric lobsters also clatter around the indoor and outdoor pools, giving off a high-pitched squeal should someone approach uninvited. The prince doesn't go overboard on furniture, instead laying out plenty of stuffed cushions and soft rugs for visitors to recline on. Every guest room has a sumptuous garden bath, large enough to play in; sometimes, chimeric fish and seahorses will join the guests in their soak.

Llywn Llwydd

It's sad to think about that grotto falling into waste, its Glamour fading with the slow withering of the nockers who once took such good care of the place.

— Prince Dylan, Seelie sidhe

At the border between Dyfed and Powys lies the now-deserted mine and grotto of Llywn Llwydd. In the 19th century, the place was a hive of activity and one of the richest mines in Wales. To ease the difficulty of life during the Interregnum, thenockers in the area formed a freehold near the mines, living cooperatively with the miners, most of whom were good men of strong stock. The miners believed that the nockers protected them from danger, while the nockers thrived on the miners' faith. Sadly, the miners abandoned Llywn Llwydd in the mid-1960s for more profitable ventures further south. The freehold is now a virtual ghost town, though a few nockers supposedly hang on, hoping the mine will reopen. Considering the bad press mining received, this doesn't seem likely.

The Principality of Powys, Land of Forgotten Plains

A cry from the sea awakens me this night!

A cry from the sea arises above the winds!

A cry from the sea impels me from place of rest this night!

After excess comes the far extending death!

— Attributed to Gwyddno Garanhir

If I get a bit choked up here, well, you'll just have to forgive me. Powys, the whole concept of it, represents so much emotion, so much lost to us Kithain of Cymru. I'm not sure I can adequately put it into words. Imagine the most beloved possession you own, something you've had for your whole life and nurtured with the utmost care. Suddenly, that thing gets broken, utterly destroyed. Do you just go back to wherever you got it and buy a new one? Do you just shrug and say, "Oh well?" No! You grieve, you get angry, you deny what it meant to you. And maybe, a long time later, you remember how you treasured it, but also how it is irreplaceable. Well, that's what Powys was to us Welsh fae. Now I'm no prophet, but I'm sure one day, someone will rebuild Powys. But not how it used to be. And that's the problem. Gwilym and others want to restore this paradise to what it was before the flood, and such a thing is patently impossible. For starters, there's too much Banality and not enough Glamour in today's world. And for another, the sidhe aren't quite what they used to be. Yeah, sure, I hope some man or woman feels the drive and strength to become high king or queen of Cymru. But I also hope they have the wisdom to look towards a future with foundations from the past, not to a past without eyes towards the future.

— Nestor Evans, Seelie satyr

What remains of the land of Powys stretches from the River Dee in the north to the River Wye in the south. The Cambrian Mountains separate it from Dyfed. Most of Offa's Dyke sat astride Powys' border with England due east. In fact, the principality forms the heart of Cymru; its clockwise borders are Gwynedd, Clwyd, England's Kingdom of Smoke, Gwynt, Glamorgan and Dyfed. But the best of Powys was a small finger of land that stretched to the sea across the River Dyfi just south of Cadair Idris in Gwynedd. This was Cantrev Gwaelod, the richest and most prosperous soil in Cymru; only a tiny part of it remains

above the waters of Cardigan Bay. People called it "Paradwys Cymru," the Paradise of Wales.

The area has forests, moors, the Brecon Beacons and the two river valleys of the Wye and the Severn. While Powys has few towns, Built and Llandrindod Wells have spectacular spas and resorts. Other towns include Newtown, Rhayader, Welshpool and Machynlleth. And for those who don't like crowds, this principality has the lowest mortal population of any other, with those who do live there being mostly farmers and craftsmen.

Cantrev Gwaelod, the Lost Lowland

I really can't think of anything bad about Gwaelod...except that it fell to the forces of destruction far before its time.

— Nestor Evans, Seelie sidhe

Many tales call Cantrev Gwaelod the most perfect hundred acres of land ever seen in Cymru. The fields were so rich and fertile they needed little tending. Game was so plentiful that if the nobles hadn't taken a few stag and rabbits, the animals would have eaten folks out of house and home. Some say the cantrev even served as an inspiration for the tale of Camelot.

Brecon Beacons

How do I manage to keep in shape? I'll tell you my secret: frequent climbs up Pen-y-fan. Do that a couple times a month, and you'll easily be as fit as me!

— Jack O'Kent, Hero

Along with Snowdonia and the Pembrokeshire Coast, the Brecon Beacons is one of Wales' three national parks. Over 500 square miles of rocky hills, moorlands and wilderness comprise the park's land; the Black Mountains, crowned by the 2900 foot Pen-y-fan peak, glower over the Usk River valley. The elite British Strategic Air Service troops use the Brecon Beacons as a training facility, as do Arctic explorers and climbers of Mount Everest.

Sprang Unlimited

My dad's some kind of wandering musician, but Mum more than makes up for him. Bet your mum doesn't take you jumping off bridges on holidays!

— Griffin Maddocks

Sprang Unlimited is a newly built outdoor outfitter near the main entrance of Brecon Beacons National Park. Modern and well stocked, the store specializes in climbing gear and has a climbing wall out back. It also has tents, sleeping bags, packs and homemade freeze-dried specialties. Madeleine Maddocks and her son Griffin own and run the place, but every minute they can spare, they're on the wall or crawling up peaks in the national park. Madeleine is a member of the Cult of Ecstasy, always pushing the envelope in her climbing exploits. She plans to attempt a climb of either Mt. Everest or K2 sometime in the next year, with Griffin as her eager partner.

Cafall's Place

You've got about one second to get off my land before I send Cuchulain here after your ass!

— Arvel Cary

Welshpool is home to a grungy junkyard and antique barn called Cafall's Place. The junkyard is less than an acre in size, all of it a complete mess. Old automobiles form the bulk of clutter, but there are also old boat parts, wagons, aluminum siding and broken bricks. The barn is a disaster area, piled with broken pieces of furniture, glass bottles, rotting books and picture frames. Arvel Cary, a grizzled man in his 50s, is the owner; most of the neighbors resent his presence, not just because the junkyard is a sty on the land, but also because Arvel is a mean old bastard. He keeps a brace of mangy wolfhounds as guard dogs, and though these creatures are relatively tame, their barks sound cruel and threatening. Arvel would just as soon everybody left him alone. He's usually civil to customers, knowing he has to make some money to pay for his grub. But he doesn't hesitate to throw someone off the property if they make him angry.

Within the heaps of crap, though, lies an old battered chair with priceless worth to the Kithain of Cymru. This is the Throne of Dragons, the long forgotten seat of the high kings and queens of Cymru, all that remains of the court in Powys. Carved from a single trunk of mountain ash, the throne once sparkled with jewels. All that remains is the wooden frame and fading velvet upholstery. One arm has broken off and dried mud covers the entire throne, but underneath the grime are dainty carvings of dragons, serpents, seashells and trees. With some cleaning and repair, a skilled artisan could easily restore this piece to its former beauty.

Glyn Severn

If you should happen to find this hidden glade, my advice would be not to startle the ghille dhu. I have a feeling he knows how to take of both himself and his home.

— Nestor Evans, Seelie satyr

Glyn Severn is the secret glade of a ghille dhu named Vaughan Davies. The place is a small cove in the River Severn where the water runs deep and still. Lots of fish swim nearby, and the branches of old trees sweep gracefully over the gentle waves of the river. The glade's source is a flat, moss-covered rock sunk in the shallows near the shore. Vaughan never strays too far from the glade; should he have to leave, his loyal salmon companion will stay to keep an eye on things.

The Principality of Glamorgan, Land of Black Rowan

Cold is the bed of the lake before the tumult of winter; the reeds are withered, the stalks are broken,

the wind is fierce, the wood is bare.

— Unknown Welsh author, 11th century

Make no mistake, rotten or not, Lloyd Morgenstern is a tough egg, and while the conflicts have simmered down to an uneasy quiet, the truth is that in our current state of affairs, the best we could hope for might be a war of attrition. By my breath and bones, I want to take down Morgenstern and his nasty chimeric stone men, but I'm wise enough to the ways of war not to do it stupidly or irrationally.

— Ulric One-Arm, Unseelie troll

Glamorgan, the Land of Black Rowan, was once the pride of Cymru. Now it's a sad place, jam packed with people, cities and "progress." The biggest city in Glamorgan is Cardiff, but there's also Newport, Caerphilly, Rhondda and Pontypridd. The River Usk serves as the principality's eastern border with Gwynt, while the Bristol Channel and the River Mellte are its southern and western borders respectively. The northern borders are more flexible, but anything above the Black Mountains, the Forest Fawr and the Brecon Beacons the fae call Powys. Glamorgan's borders, as a whole, are unstable, because the Dauntain that commands the principality constantly tries to extend them. Newport, for instance, used to be within Gwynt, but no longer.

Despite the mining conditions and the cities, Glamorgan was once a place of beauty, with gorgeous mountain ash trees. Then, Lloyd Morgenstern fell into darkness. Previously a nocker hero, he somehow changed and turned his back on his Kithain heritage. The Tylwyth Teg are unsure whether he did so intentionally or became corrupted through the work of another. After a brief disappearance in the 1980s, he reappeared around 1991, hell-bent to destroy any Glamour and Kithain he could get his hands on. He quickly killed off the fae in Glamorgan who didn't escape. He raided both Gwynt and Dyfed, but fled rather than face defeat at the hands of Prince Dylan and a motley of commoners from Cantrev Cymer in Gwynt

Cardiff

Perhaps if Cardiff can be retaken, the victory will stir the hearts and minds of the Tylwyth Teg and rouse them to seek out a true king or queen.

— Prince Dylan, Seelie sidhe

Capital city since 1959, Cardiff has grown from a small port town into a thriving industrial center. The city center holds numerous museums, schools and commercial offices. Romans and Normans both used the city as a strategic point, but Cardiff only experienced large-scale growth since the 19th century and the Industrial Revolution.

Cardiff's wealth comes from the now-dwindling coal mining industry. Much of this old money is now pouring into the Cardiff Bay Barrage, a dyke that will create a huge lake and a new commercial embankment from the Rivers Taf and Ely. The barrage will span from Queen Alexandra Head in the north around to Penarth in the south of the city. Three locks allow passage between the inland and the sea.

Cardiff sits on Wales' southern coast, where the mouth of the River Severn opens into the Bristol Channel. A number of

major roads connect Cardiff to points in England and Scotland; London is only a three hour drive. Cardiff also has an international airport and many rail connections to cities throughout Britain.

The Welsh National Opera and Symphony, the National Museum of Wales and the Welsh Industrial and Maritime Museum are all feature sites of Cardiff. The city also has a large ice-skating rink and numerous rugby fields, as the residents of the city are particularly keen on sports.

Cardiff also has several period shops that feature Victorian and Edwardian wares and costumes.

Cardiff Castle

Ah, what finer pleasure could there be than sipping a fine glass of Tattinger and smelling the roses in the gardens while we survey the future here in Cardiff?

— Sir Mortimer Evans, Harbinger of Avalon

A melange of styles, this castle combines Roman walls with a Norman keep and 19th-century decor. Bute Gardens and a park surround the structure, located downtown in the capital. Sir Mortimer Evans, Cardiff's Harbinger of Avalon, often rents the gardens for private parties and business dinners.

Clancy's Place

Those silly folk have no idea how stupid they look in those pointy boots and wide-brimmed hats. Let them act like idiots! See if I care.

— Lloyd Morgenstern, Dauntain

Off Ninian Park Road, Clancy's Place is the epitome of a kitschy urban cowboy bar (or at least what the Welsh owners think a western-style bar should be). It's one of the hottest places in Cardiff, a special favorite of visiting Kindred. There are two mechanical bulls, waitresses in tight fringed leather boleros and shorts, chicken wings, baby back ribs and lots of cheap beer. Most nights, the music is live, second-string country and western singers, but there's also karaoke for amateurs and a jukebox full of Hank Williams and Garth Brooks when the singers are too bad. The cover charge is a mere £6 for an evening's entertainment. The club has several dance instructors who drag even the most reluctant patrons onto the floor. There's plenty of room for line dancing as well as eating and socializing.

Hall of the Fisher King

I'm not much of a party wench, but I've always had a good time pretending to be a noble damsel while gnawing meat on a stick.

— Sian Rowlands, Rheibes ferch Llandona

Hall of the Fisher King is an Arthurian reenactment banquet hall located on Castle Street in central Cardiff. For a mere £30, visitors can wear period garb and enjoy spit-roasted chickens, fresh bread, steak on a stick and a variety of medieval entertainment. The wooden tables are long, and the beeswax tapers send a merry light onto the tapestry-hung walls. Each night, the doorkeeper draws two ticket stubs to choose the evening's king and queen. They get to sit at the head of the table and issue commands to the staff and performers. While Lloyd Morgenstern has disdain for Clancy's Place, he despises Hall of the Fisher King and would

close it in a moment if he could. However, the hall has a number of wealthy backers that have thus far managed to steer clear of the Dauntain's bids for takeover.

The Spectrum

Physical well-being isn't unimportant. Mental discipline is just so much more important.

— Toshiro Kusaka, New World Order

The Spectrum, a venture of the New World Order, is a sprawling kiddie techno-museum. All the displays are hands-on and interactive, demonstrating the "scientific" aspects of light, sound and energy. Yet as the children progress through the museum, the exhibits get more and more dull and technical. The final exhibit is an IMAX subliminal theatre that preaches a message of science's benefits to the children's subconscious. The N.W.O. hopes that the thousands of kids who visit each year will go home with a new imperative to dabble in the computer or chemistry lab rather than wasting their time on the playground.

The Principality of Gwynnt, the Borderland

*How happy are the wild birds!
They can go where they will,
now to the sea, now to the mountain,
and come home without rebuke.*

— Unknown Welsh author, 17th century

Why do we call places like Gwynnt and Gwynedd principalities, even though they don't have ruling princes? I guess it's a tradition we're loathe to shake. Take Britain as a whole, for example. Do you think even if the government decided to ditch the royals it would become the Republic of Great Britain? I doubt it. Just because you don't have a prince doesn't mean you can't be a principality; it's more of a division of political convenience than anything else, you see.

— Nestor Evans, Seelie satyr

Gwynnt is the smallest of the principalities of Cymru, as much a place of rivers as a borderland. The River Severn flows through the south, with the Usk in the southwest and the Monnow in the northeast. No major cities occupy the principality, but towns include Abergavenny, Monmouth, Usk, and Chepstow. The countryside is rich and lush, and has easy access to waterways and roads as well as England, France and the Channel Islands. The Monmouthshire and Brecon Canal, for example, flow from just east of Pontypool to Brecon in Powys. Along the Wye River, Gwynnt borders England's Kingdom of Smoke to the east, Glamorgan to the south and Powys to the north and west.

The land in Gwynnt is rich for farming and green as any in the Isle of the Mighty; most of the rich soil comes from the rivers' silt. Gwynnt also has several important historical sites, with the Roman excavations at Caerleon and the Abbey at Tintern.

Cantrev Cymer

I really hate living here.

— Derwyn ap Allyn, Seelie pooka

Cymer is the only cantrev in Gwynt, covering more or less the entire southern portion of the principality. A few years ago, a small group of Kithain tried to start a freehold in the north of the principality, near the River Monnow, but they disappeared without a trace. Most people suspect Morgenstern or his henchmen stopped them.

Most Tylwyth Teg in Cantrev Cymer look to the wise satyr Nestor Evans for leadership. He has opened his small freehold to any who swear loyalty to Cymru and enmity to the Dauntain. Nestor is so open-hearted, it would be fatally easy for a foe to infiltrate and destroy his cozy motley.

Table of the Twin Rivers

This Table of the Twin Rivers is what I believe to be the finest tavern, in all Cymru. Not that I'm bragging, of course.

— Nestor Evans, Seelie satyr

The Table of the Twin Rivers, in the town of Trellick, was formerly the home of Nestor Evans' grandfather. When the old man died, he bequeathed the place to his favorite grandson. Nestor has kept much of the turn of the century feel to the place, with white stucco walls, dark wood exposed beams and a thatched roof. Nestor and his pooka friend Derwyn cut the six-foot bar from an old rowan tree that blew down in a storm; they purchased most of the mismatched tables and chairs from second-hand stores on market days. To support Gwynt's artisans, Nestor purchased the exquisite curtains and bedcovers from some local apprentice weavers. In addition to the common room and kitchen, the tavern has three bedrooms upstairs for rent. Nestor's own room is an old pantry on the first floor that he's refurbished to suit his own exotic tastes. The satyr is a fine cook and keeps a wide variety of international beers and liquors in stock.

To enchanted eyes, the tavern looks just the same, except for the presence of an ornately carved door underneath the stairs to the second floor. Behind this door is a cozy sitting room and a warm balefire. Most Kithain simply hang out with Nestor in the main bar, using the sitting room only if there's private business to discuss.

Bron Methlyn

Swingers check in, but they don't check out.

— Lady Jane Bowden, barabbi

Bron Methlyn, an attractive Victorian bed and breakfast in the Wye Valley, looks quite normal at first glance. It has five pleasant bedrooms with four-posters, a dining room and a small herb garden. Here, appearances are both deceiving and damning.

Lady Jane Bowden, a former Harbinger of Avalon turned barabbi, is the new owner of Bron Methlyn. Using a pseudonym, she advertises Bron Methlyn in singles magazines as a place to make new friends; in reality, it's a dominatrix' dream. The posts on the beds conceal a myriad of barbed hooks and ties for bondage,

Welsh Cuisine

No discussion of Cymru's culture would be complete without delving into the culinary world. Welsh rarebit, a sauce of cheese and beer on toast, and Welshcakes, fried biscuits with spices and currants, are fares commonly known outside Cymru's borders. What fewer people know about are the many delicious varieties of cawl, a thick broth made from meat, tubers, herbs and leeks; Glamorgan sausages, breadcrumbs, cheese and seasonings, shaped and baked; or the delicious game birds, beasts and fish that serve as main courses. A rich honey-glazed cake called Bara Brith usually ends off the meal or serves as a luscious snack at tea time.

and in the basement is Lady Jane's dungeon of horrors. She has a variety of torture implements, including hot pincers, mind-altering drugs, scalpels, a rack and numerous whips and flails. Lady Jane is a skilled expert; she can keep a client in agony for days while she corrupts his or her mind and body. Her cruelest trick is making her victims beg not for release but for more torture, turning curious innocents into slaving masochists. Her former allies in the Technocracy and any Tradition mages would leap at the chance to end Lady Jane's reign of terror.

The Vanishing Naga

If you ever want to really gross out your teacher, get some fake blood from Mandala's magic shop, squirt it all over your face and pretend you ran through a plate glass door. Guaranteed hysteria every time.

— Bronwen Jones, Unseelie sluagh

Mandala Bhattachariya, a nocker wilder, is famous among Kithain, hedge magicians and conjurers (stage magicians) for her magic and illusional apparati. From her permanently parked tinker's wagon and workshop, she makes all items herself and provides a lifetime guarantee. Mandala's specialty is trick cabinets; these large boxes make people disappear, change into tigers, or appear to be cut in half, with a little help from the performer, of course. The cabinets are extremely expensive, but they are works of art decorated to specification. The nocker also sells books, videotapes and white rabbits. Many of her smaller items, like rubber chickens, cups and balls, floating cards and trick ropes, are more affordable. The Vanishing Naga is located on the A404 highway near Cwmbran.

The Caerleon Linguistics Academy

What is language but an extension of the Song we all carry within our souls?

— Dakarai Morley, Celestial Chorus

Father Dakarai Morley is a Jamaican Celestial Chorister and language expert. He came to Wales after a crisis of faith and established an institute for the study of ancient languages and religions just outside the historical city of Caerleon. The institute is a condemned boarding school he and a few acolytes purchased cheaply; now they use the school as a center of religious learning and enlightenment. Their current projects include translating great works of world religions, such as the Apocrypha and the Koran, into Welsh and certain obscure languages. Father



Morley wants the school to grow and would be willing to take on dedicated new students; he is especially interested in newly Awakened pupils in need of a mentor. He and five other teachers and translators currently work with 14 students.

Margaux smiled at me then, closing her book, sending a whiff of Evening in Paris through the air. "Nestor, how could I have ever doubted you? As usual, cheri, you have fulfilled my wildest dreams." I felt her lips brush mine, her long fingers stalking across my neck and shoulders and...

The next thing I remembered was feeling near frozen. Moonlight streamed through the open windows of my little cubbyhole bedroom, the whistles of the breeze through the tiny spring leaves the only sound.

Sitting up, I moaned at the ache of my head. Damn, I hadn't felt this bad since a trip to Crete a few years ago! And I was alone...all alone. I glanced around, and sure enough, picked up a trace of that bloody perfume. No friggin' note, nothing! Then I slowly became aware of a bizarre sensation...and looked down.

Margaux had left all right, taking some of my best dirt with her. She'd also taken the scroll I'd given her, no doubt oblivious to the fact it was an excellent copy. But at the same time, I couldn't be angry. I'm really just a fat, old good-natured bumblebee, heading from flower to flower.

Besides, I thought, pleurably untying the silky blue ribbon that once graced her throat, she gave me first prize.





Chapter Nine: Y Cymri, the People

*But when the battles between you and your adversaries are over...
in the end, the fate of all the world will depend on just those people,
and on how many of them are good or bad, stupid or wise.*

— John Rowlands in Susan Cooper's *The Grey King*

While no stereotype accurately describes all members of a culture, the Welsh fall into a few general categories of appearance. This is perhaps because of their common Celtic ancestry. Most are naturally fair-skinned, have dark hair (reddish tones as well), and blue, green or gray eyes.

The fae population far outnumbers the mages. Members of both groups tend to congregate in the northern portions of Wales. Exceptions to this include the Technocracy who are gathered in Cardiff and the Dauntain in Glamorgan. Other than with the Rheibau ferch Llandona, many of who are kinain, little interaction takes place between mages and fae.

Kithain

*A new moon leads me to
woods of dreams and I follow.
A new world waits for me;
my dream, my way.*

— Enya, "China Roses"

The Tylwyth Teg, the changelings of Wales, contains two general groups. The first and largest group, led by Gwilym Pugh, Nestor Evans and Prince Dylan, seeks a new high king or queen for Cymru. It believes the might of a single ruler could restore Glamorgan and Powys, make peace in Clwyd and create an abundance of Dreamers and Glamour. The group points to the success of Concordia as an

example. The second group, headed by Countess Angharad, believes that matters are progressing quite normally in Cymru without a high king or queen. A Dauntain might be in Glamorgan, but it isn't a great enough threat to warrant political upheaval. A single ruler, it believes, would compromise the freedom of the Tylwyth Teg.

Discussion of such matters never takes place in a formal setting. Groups of changelings usually banter about politics in a relaxed manner at the Llangollen eisteddfod. With few exceptions, commoners and nobles get along well together, and freeholds are generally open to all Tylwyth Teg and their vouchsafed guests. Despite differences in politics, the Welsh Kithain love their country; if threatened, they would undoubtedly band together for the good of Cymru and lay all other disputes aside.

The Seelie Court

*It is not the trappings that make the prince...nor, indeed, the
sword that makes the warrior.*

— Prince Gwydion in Lloyd Alexander's *The Book of Three*

Duty, honor and a quest for beauty guide the actions of Seelie Welsh changelings. Most follow the Seelie code closely and respect the old ways. Consequently, most of the kingmakers are Seelie fae. The chief reason the Seelie want a high king or queen is because they believe a strong leader could revive Cymru's past, allowing future generations to enjoy its peace and tranquillity. They hesitate to take any actions without thorough consideration.

The Unseelie Court

Why, bless your little thumping hearts, we aren't evil.

— Orddu in Lloyd Alexander's *The Black Cauldron*

Members of the Unseelie Court in Cymru believe that nostalgia is a waste of time. Dwelling on Powys' past diminishes what's good in Cymru's present. The Unseelie want the traditional farts to quit sniveling and take some action. If Lloyd Morgenstern needs to be killed, it should be done quickly and efficiently, with minimal fuss. Ulric One-Arm plans a move on Glamorgan sooner than later; he wants the help of Nestor and other Seelie, but he's willing to go alone if necessary.

The Principality of Clwyd

Countess Gwrly of the Birds

To young Gwrly O'Donnell, the onslaught of the Chrysalis provoked terror. She began to have dreams. In her dreams she hurt her best friend Angharad Jones. In her real life, she felt alienated from her kind and loving parents, immigrants from Ireland who ran a successful bed and breakfast near Llangollen. Gwrly kept these dreams to herself, retreating into silence, withdrawing from the world. Angharad, in a desperate attempt to discover what ailed her friend, took Gwrly on a long walk by the Clwyd one spring afternoon. At the Clwyd, Gwrly lost herself completely within the Dream Dance. Angharad drifted on the verge of panic when she too began to feel the effects of the Chrysalis and sank into its embrace. Suddenly, Gwrly awoke. Though Kithain rarely remember their former lives, Gwrly clearly saw her past life, when she was Gwrly of House Liam. She recalled her affectionate friendship with another sidhe, Angharad ferch Mynydd, a companionship turned sour when a mortal bard fell in love with them both. Gwrly felt the agony anew



as she heard the babble of the River Clwyd, where the bard, unable to choose between the two women, took his own life. Closing her eyes, she saw, for a fleeting moment, the trees and skies of Arcadia. This is where, because she refused to make a truce with Angharad, her exile began. And then her hands sought to choke the life from Angharad's sleeping form. If not for the timely intervention of Prince Dylan, Gwrly might have exacted her vengeance on Angharad; fortunately, the prince stayed her hand. He gave her the greater portion of Clwyd to guard until the day a high king rules Cymru.

In her mortal seeming, Gwrly attended university and became a veterinarian, specializing in avian medicine. Deep in her heart, Gwrly would like to make peace with Angharad, but she is far too stubborn and proud to take the initiative. Likewise, she has long loved Prince Dylan, but fears to show her feelings, recalling the price her beloved bard paid for his love.

Court: Seelie

Legacies: Courtier/Riddler

House: Liam

Seeming: Wilder

Kith: Sidhe

Physical: Strength 2, Dexterity 2, Stamina 2

Social: Charisma 4, Manipulation 4, Appearance 5

Mental: Perception 3, Intelligence 3, Wits 4

Talents: Alertness 2, Dodge 1, Empathy 3, Expression 2, Intimidation 1, Intrigue 1, Kenning 3, Subterfuge 1

Skills: Animal Ken 3, Dancing 2, Drive 1, Etiquette 3, Falconry 2, Leadership 3, Melee 2, Performance 1, Stealth 1

Knowledges: Enigmas 2, Heraldry 2, Law 1, Linguistics 1, Medicine 1, Mythlore 2, Occult 2, Politics 3, Science 3

Arts: Chronos 2, Primal 3, Soothsay 4, Sovereign 3, Wayfare 1

Realms: Actor 4, Fae 4, Nature 3

Backgrounds: Chimera 2, Contacts 1, Gremayre 1, Holdings 2, Resources 3, Retainers 3, Title 4, Treasures 2

Glamour: 7

Banality: 2

Willpower: 6

Treasures: In addition to her bright-blue chimeric armor and great sword, Gwrly's pennon, bearing a blue kestrel against a white field, is a treasure of no mean power. Whenever it blows in the breeze, she gains an additional +1 to all rolls involving Manipulation. Usually Gwrly hangs the pennon at eisteddfodau or when inspiring her retainers before battle.

Image: As both human and fae, Gwrly is a tall, lithe, blonde beauty. She wears blue clothes and jewelry that match the brilliant violet of her eyes. Cool and aloof, Gwrly hides her passion beneath a hard exterior. Among her retainers, she is a kind but firm mistress who inspires great loyalty. Those who serve her wish they could make her happier.

Roleplaying Hints: The world is too much with you at times, and you deal with your sorrows and passions by keeping them bottled in your heart. Better to be a bit more serious and reticent than expose yourself to more pain and loss. Your love for Dylan and your desire for peace with Angharad remain the deepest secrets you possess.



Hugh Calhoun

Born to a large working class family in Chester, Hugh grew up poor and desperate. His father, a Seelie boggan, tried to teach his son right and wrong, raising him to be honorable and prudent. Hugh wanted none of that. He began cheating and stealing in his teens, and finally ran away from home when he was 17. Hugh fell in with some criminal gangs soon after. He became known for his extraordinary skill at weaponsmithing. Soon, he was able to support himself handsomely from sales and service without risking his life as a thief.

Hugh met Edie Davis and a few members of the Brotherhood of Herne when they made a large purchase from his storehouse in Liverpool. It didn't take him too long to figure out she was a werewolf; after a ribald insult, she nearly ripped one of her partner's arms off. Her bestial nature thrilled Hugh, while she found shacking up with a faerie gave her a modicum of respect from the Dryn a drowd yn flaid. They opened the Iron Stag within six months of their meeting. Hugh is a little bored with Edie now, but he's secretly afraid to end the relationship. Her claws are a threat, and he knows he could never cultivate contacts as well as she can. For now, greed and lust keep them together.

Court: Unseelie

Legacies: Rogue/Troubadour

Seeming: Wilder

Kith: Nocker

Physical: Strength 3, Dexterity 2, Stamina 4

Social: Charisma 2, Manipulation 3, Appearance 2

Mental: Perception 2, Intelligence 2, Wits 4

Talents: Alertness 3, Athletics 1, Brawl 2, Intimidation 1, Streetwise 3

Skills: Blacksmith 2, Brewing 1, Crafts 2, Firearms 3, Gunsmithing 5, Jeweler 2, Mechanic 1, Survival 1

Knowledges: Law 1, Lore (Garou) 2, Politics 1, Science (Chemistry) 3, Science (Metallurgy) 2

Arts: Chicanery 3, Legerdemain 2, Primal 2, Pyretics 1, Wayfare 2

Realms: Actor 2, Fae 2, Nature 3

Backgrounds: Contacts 3, Patron 2, Resources 3

Glamour: 4

Banality: 3

Willpower: 5

Image: Even though he is big and in both mortal and fae seemings, Hugh is not much to look at. He's bald and has beady dark eyes; as a fae, his ears are large and pointed and his skin a pasty grayish white. Hugh usually wears heavy canvas work pants and thick-leather boots. He prefers to be bare-chested in his workshop. He'll don a T-shirt when drinking at the Iron Stag.

Roleplaying Hints: Profit and destruction are your meat and drink. Having a girlfriend who turns into a giant hairy monster bolsters your own self-image as a man of power and influence. Edie is a meal ticket and warmth on a cold night, nothing more. The only thing you take pride in is your work; it must be nigh-perfect, or you're discontent; a botched job is unacceptable.

The Principality of Gwynedd

Gwilym the Seneschal

Gwilym is only one in a long line of commoner seneschals "holding down the fort" for the Kithain in Gwynedd until a high king returns who can restore the lost realm of Powys and lead the Tylwyth Teg as a united people into a new Spring. Many nobles such as Dylan and Gwrlly value Gwilym's opinions and wisdom. Gwilym gained great respect and honor in the War of Ivy. In his mortal seeming, Gwilym Pugh lives in the small village of Penmachno. He is a widower with three daughters; the youngest, Susan, lives at home and helps run his business. Very much a people person, the old boggan especially loves animals and children. As twilight



settles around him, he feels the increasing weight of finding a successor for his office. Gwilym still hopes, though, that he will see a new high king of Cymru in his waning lifetime.

His one mortal worry is his daughter Susan. She seems to be unhappy about not being Kithain. He loves her dearly; it couldn't matter less to him that she's not fae.

Court: Seelie

Legacies: Regent/Fatalist

House: Gwydion (affiliation)

Seeming: Grump

Kith: Boggan

Motley: Cantrev of Snowdonia

Physical: Strength 2, Dexterity 2, Stamina 2

Social: Charisma 4, Manipulation 3, Appearance 2

Mental: Perception 4, Intelligence 3, Wits 3

Talents: Alertness 3, Athletics 1, Brawl 2, Diplomacy 2, Empathy 3, Expression 3, Intimidation 2, Kenning 3, Streetwise 2, Subterfuge 1

Skills: Animal Ken 1, Climbing 1, Crafts 1, Etiquette 3, Leadership 1, Melee 2, Performance 1, Ride 3, Security 1, Stealth 1, Survival 2

Knowledges: Enigmas 2, Heraldry 3, Investigation 2, Law 1, Linguistics 1, Medicine 2, Mythlore 3, Occult 1, Politics 2

Arts: Dream-Craft 2, Legerdemain 3, Primal 5, Soothsay 1, Sovereign 1, Wayfare 3

Realms: Actor 5, Nature 3, Fae 2, Scene 3

Backgrounds: Chimera 2, Contacts 3, Holdings 5, Resources 2, Treasures 3

Glamour: 7

Banality: 5

Willpower: 8

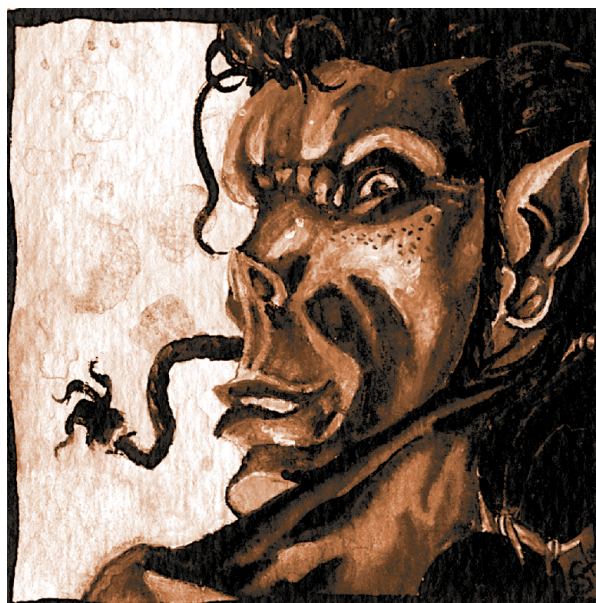
Treasures: Gwilym's only treasure is his staff of office, a carved birch rod shod in silver. The staff can store up to ten points of Glamour, making it indeed useful.

Image: In both human and fae seemings, Gwilym is a small, darkly tanned man with receding black hair and roughened hands. He appears strong and wiry in human guise, but more plump and stocky as a fae. The pleasant scents of leather-soap, hay and horses cling to him; his clothes are likewise those of a farmer and outdoorsman.

Roleplaying Hints: Duty is paramount to you; it takes precedent over everything else. Foremost in your mind is choosing a fair-minded, capable successor who can keep Gwynedd together until a high king returns. Part of your duty also involves helping other Kithain and making everyone feel welcome at Mount Snowdon.

McGowan the Wanderer

Originally hailing from the Kingdom of Dalriada in Scotland, McGowan had little in common with the destructive redcaps that plagued his homeland's moors and highlands. A few redcaps aided him as he awoke to his fae nature, but he never quite fell in with them. Instead, he liked wandering, sometimes he caused trouble, but more often he met people and got into some damn-good fights



whenever possible. Being a redcap, McGowan found travel easy; he always had food on hand, and a rock was just as good to sack on for the night as any bed. In his mortal seeming, Alastair McGowan occasionally took a construction job, being pretty handy with a pick and hammer. Lately, McGowan found Mount Snowdon to be a good base of operations, a central spot from which to explore Cymru and other parts of the Isle of the Mighty.

Alastair awoke to his fae nature in his hometown of Inverness while hiking around Culloden. But today, he strangely refuses to return to Scotland. Ulric and Gwilym suspect he may be in trouble with one of the rulers, or worse, with the Fachan's Brood or other Unseelie.

Court: Seelie

Legacies: Wayfarer/Churl

Seeming: Wilder

Kith: Redcap

Motley: Mount Snowdon

Physical: Strength 3, Dexterity 4, Stamina 3

Social: Charisma 3, Manipulation 2, Appearance 2

Mental: Perception 3, Intelligence 2, Wits 3

Talents: Alertness 2, Brawl 4, Carousing 2, Dodge 2, Scrounge 2, Streetwise 3

Skills: Climbing 3, Drive 1, Fast Talk 1, Gambling 2, Melee 2, Storytelling 3, Survival 2

Knowledges: Medicine 1, Mythlore 2, Occult 1, Politics 2

Arts: Chicanery 1, Legerdemain 1, Pyretics 2, Wayfare 4

Realms: Actor 3, Fae 2, Nature 3

Backgrounds: Contacts 2, Gremayre 1, Resources 1, Treasures 4

Glamour: 5

Banality: 3

Willpower: 5

Treasures: McGowan has a stolen bronze torc that allows him to get a general feel for other Kithain's legacies with a successful Perception + Kenning roll.

Image: A little taller than the average redcap, McGowan stands about five and a half feet, with muscles like taut cords. His hair is long and flaming orange-red, tied into braids fastened with barbed wire. Large freckled splotches dot his white skin, and his eyes shine a dim red. As a mortal, McGowan looks much the same...except for smaller teeth, blue eyes and darker skin. He always wears rough-denim work clothes and heavy hobnailed boots.

Roleplaying Hints: You love a good scrap as well as a jolly shag, but somehow the mindless destruction of life and property doesn't have that much appeal. You can be as rowdy and crass as any, much of it is lip service to the stereotype. But don't ever let anyone else know how you see the world!



Ulric One-Arm

Originally from the Isle of Man, Ulric has traveled almost as much as McGowan, giving the might of his ax in service to whoever can fetch his price. He's served Seelie and Unseelie alike, isn't particular as to which kith he works for and especially loves telling tales of his own exploits, in a sort of "there we were" fashion with generous embroidery on the truth. His mortal identity, Ulric Maugham, is an itinerant laborer who manages to survive on a lean monthly pension. Ulric grew up on the docks of south England, and lost his arm in a freight accident. But that hasn't stopped him from being a warrior to reckon with.

Ulric is quickly becoming active in Unseelie politics. He is a favorite of Countess Angharad, and to impress her, he's soon planning a raid on Lloyd Morgenstern in Glamorgan. Gwylm and McGowan have tried to discourage him, or at least convince him to wait for backup. But Ulric's patience has worn thin. He wants to waste no more time with Seelie alliance.

Court: Unseelie

Legacies: Humbug/Paladin

Seeming: Wilder

Kith: Troll

Motley: Mount Snowdon

Physical: Strength 6, Dexterity 4, Stamina 5

Social: Charisma 2, Manipulation 2, Appearance 2

Mental: Perception 3, Intelligence 2, Wits 4

Talents: Alertness 3, Athletics 1, Brawl 4, Carousing 4, Intimidation 3, Streetwise 2

Skills: Fast-Draw 2, Firearms 1, Gambling 1, Mechanic 1, Melee 3, Storytelling 3, Survival 2

Knowledges: Enigmas 1, Heraldry 1, History 1, Linguistics 2

Arts: Chicanery 2, Primal 3, Wayfare 2

Realms: Actor 3, Prop 3, Scene 2

Backgrounds: Contacts 2, Gremayre 2, Resources 1

Glamour: 4

Banality: 3

Willpower: 7

Image: Ulric is gigantic, even for a troll. His remaining arm is thicker than two or three sidhe put together, and he easily wields a battle ax despite his disability. The troll's skin is a deep azure blue and his graying-brown hair lies in beaded corn rows. In his mortal seeming, Ulric is still enormous, with sea-toughened skin, cold blue eyes and grizzled brown hair. He generally wears torn overalls and an ancient navy pea coat.

Roleplaying Hints: You're a chief among trolls and you don't give a damn that you have only one arm. That only makes your numerous victories more impressive! "Might makes right" is your motto, and woe to any who try to assert otherwise! Boast of glorious deeds whenever you can; fear is better than love.

Celyndra Rhys

The sole mistress of Bryn Celyn, Celyndra seldom ventures from her hill of holly, except when the occasional mortal man comes too close! The woman is a bona-fide nymphomaniac, reveling in the Summer of her life. She owns the small farm of Bryn Celyn, raises a few critters and takes care of the gardens and trees



in her rocky eyrie. But on occasion, Celyndra sits in fields near Gwynedd's rough mountain hiking trails, plays her small harp, hoping someone will come along she can seduce. As a general rule, she doesn't welcome other Kithain, but despite her Unseelie nature, Celyndra would be hard-pressed to deny another in need of hospitality.

Celyndra is the daughter of a Kenyan migrant couple who worked for several years in Wales. They used their savings to purchase the farm at Bryn Celyn, eventually returning home to the warmer southern climate. Celyndra is known to Prince Dylan and a few others as a seeress of great talent. The problem is that although the visions she sees are usually accurate, she doesn't always pass the truth on to her "clients." Unfortunately, Prince Dylan has complete faith in her predictions. He doesn't realize that Celyndra may be lying. Thus, she has a major influence over the course of Kithain politics.

Court: Unseelie

Legacies: Cerenaic/Courtier

Seeming: Summer (Wilder)

Kith: Ghille dhu

Physical: Strength 2, Dexterity 3, Stamina 3

Social: Charisma 4, Manipulation 4, Appearance 3

Mental: Perception 2, Intelligence 2, Wits 3

Talents: Acting 1, Alertness 2, Artistic Expression 3, Mimicry 1, Kenning 2, Seduction 4

Skills: Animal Ken 1, Camouflage 2, Dancing 1, Hunting 1, Performance 2, Singing 1, Survival 2, Swimming 1, Tracking 1

Knowledges: Enigmas 1, Herbalism 3, Mythlore 2, Poisons 1

Arts: Chicanery 1, Primal 4, Soothsay 4, Wayfare 3

Realms: Actor 4, Fae 1, Nature 4, Scene 3

Backgrounds: Dreamers 1, Gremayre 5, Holdings 1, Resources 1, Treasure 3

Glamour: 6

Banality: 3

Willpower: 7

Treasures: Celyndra has a beautiful harp with strings that shine like burnished gold. It makes her incredibly alluring (+1 to Appearance) in the presence of any male.

Image: Willow-slim, with long black tresses and dark skin, Celyndra is exotic and beautiful. As a fae, her skin is a soft green, like the leaves of a birch. Her hair is a dark jade with black roots, while her eyes glisten like aquamarines in the sea.

Roleplaying Hints: You are the quintessential hedonist continually seeking to sate your thirsty appetites. The morality of luring young men to your couch matters not, for life is short and this is the season to live it to the utmost!



The Principality of Dyfed

Prince Dylan ap Morgan

As a mortal, Dylan Pritchett maintains a quiet existence as a marine biologist. But much of the time, he dwells as Prince Dylan ap Morgan of Dyfed in his grand pentre on the Pembrokeshire coast. Dylan has a troubled and uncertain life. The ghille dhu Celyndra shattered his vision of becoming high king of Cymru by predicting that if he ruled, a great curse would settle on the Land of Song and Companions. Thus, Dylan has waning self-confidence in his ability to make good decisions. He worries that if he tries to do anything, his land will crumble into ruins, people will die and so on. Dylan is sometimes so terrified of failure that he simply does nothing...which causes tongues to wag even more. Despite his lack of initiative, Dylan is a good man. He is a kind, generous lord to all the Kithain of Cymru.

Dylan's cousin Gwyn was the former prince of Dyfed; this noble sidhe saw his younger relative through his childling years and groomed him for rulership. Gwyn perished in one of the first battles with Lloyd Morgenstern, and Dylan has vowed vengeance on the Dauntain for this wrong.

Court: Seelie

Legacies: Philanthropist/Fop

House: Gwydion

Seeming: Wilder

Kith: Sidhe

Physical: Strength 3, Dexterity 3, Stamina 2

Social: Charisma 4, Manipulation 3, Appearance 5

Mental: Perception 3, Intelligence 3, Wits 4

Talents: Alertness 2, Artistic Expression 1, Athletics 1, Diplomacy 2, Empathy 3, Intrigue 1, Kenning 3, Seduction 1, Style 2, Subterfuge 2

Skills: Animal Ken 1, Dancing 2, Drive 2, Etiquette 3, Hunting 1, Leadership 4, Melee 2, Ride 2, Singing 1, Swimming 2, Tracking 1

Knowledges: Computer 1, Enigmas 3, Heraldry 4, History 2, Law 1, Linguistics 2, Medicine 1, Mythlore 3, Politics 2, Science 3, Taxidermy 1

Arts: Chronos 3, Dream-Craft 1, Naming 1, Primal 3, Soothsay 1, Sovereign 5, Wayfare 3

Realms: Actor 3, Fae 4, Nature 4, Prop 1, Scene 2

Backgrounds: Chimera 2, Contacts 3, Gremayre 2, Holdings 3, Political Connections 3, Resources 4, Retinue 4, Title 5, Treasures 4

Glamour: 6

Banality: 3

Willpower: 7

Treasures: Prince Dylan owns a magical coracle that takes him anywhere, as long as his destination touches water. He also has a powerful sword that can raise seastorms, though he is reluctant to use this power because he cannot control it. His chimerical armor gleams gold, and he often wears a woven green and gold cloak that allows him to walk upon water.

Image: Fair-haired, tall and graceful, Dylan is a perfect sidhe prince. He wears simple but stately garments in his household colors of green and gold that enhance his blond hair and leaf-green eyes. He is quick to smile, slow to anger and bears himself with dignity and assurance at all times...at least on the outside.

Roleplaying Hints: You carry a heavy, terrible burden you can share with no one. You've tried to learn some lessons from this loss, but the only thing you know for certain is that the price of being true to your duty is sorrow. You wish you could find a confidante, someone to share your heart and your troubles, but thus far, you've been unsuccessful. You're a romantic sidhe, though, and perhaps hope springs eternal.

The Lost Principality of Powys

Vaughan Davies

Vaughan Davies learned of his fae nature while sailing on his father's small boat down the River Severn. Derwyn ap Allyn rescued the young man, explaining about the wonders of the Kithain. Vaughan soon after felt a calling in the waters, and discovered a wonder along the river's banks: a long-forgotten glade. He named the place Glyn Severn, keeping its location secret from all but a few trusted friends like Derwyn and Nestor. Vaughan is happiest in his glyn or on the river, taking passengers on scenic day cruises, and continuing to learn about the wonders of the world around him.

The ghille dhu watches the whirl of Kithain society as an outsider. He doesn't understand the importance of tournaments or the companionship of pub-hopping and so on. To Vaughan, nothing is more sacred than the land of Cymru; caring for it, he believes, should guide the actions of all Kithain.



Court: Seelie

Legacies: Crafter/Wretch

Seeming: Wilder

Kith: Ghille dhu

Physical: Strength 3, Dexterity 4, Stamina 4

Social: Charisma 3, Manipulation 2, Appearance 2

Mental: Perception 3, Intelligence 2, Wits 3

Talents: Alertness 2, Athletics 2, Empathy 1, Kenning 2, Scan 1, Search 2

Skills: Archery 1, Carpentry 1, Climbing 1, Crafts 2, Drive 1, First Aid 2, Hunting 1, Mechanic 2, Stealth 2, Swimming 2, Tracking 1

Knowledges: Enigmas 1, Herbalism 1, Linguistics 1, Mythlore 2

Arts: Legerdemain 2, Primal 2, Wayfare 4

Realms: Actor 2, Fae 2, Nature 3, Scene 1

Glamour: 6

Banality: 2

Willpower: 8

Image: Vaughan has a rugged look about him; his hands are gnarled, his beard and hair usually unkempt and his clothes often bear stains from the river. But his blue eyes are kind, and he is quick to smile and to tell a witty joke. In his fae seeming, his skin and hair are a verdant green. While on the river, Vaughan is never without his companion, a big salmon with glittering silver scales. The salmon likes to play tricks on Vaughan, such as stealing his cap and so on, but it also gives him wise advice in times of trouble.

Roleplaying Hints: You like the simple life you lead; you can have both the company of good companions and the peace of solitude whenever you need them. You know the doom of your kith is a shorter life than most, and you worry on occasion of what will become of Glyn Severn when you forget your fae nature.



The Principality of Glamorgan

Lloyd Morgenstern

In his youth during the 1980s, Lloyd Morgenstern worked to improve working conditions for miners; a few nobles of House Dougal even paid honor to him for his deeds. But as time passed and nothing changed for the better, he grew tired of the battle and in a fit of Unseelie madness decided to join the enemy. Lloyd used his influence with the mine owners to shut down a number of mines, and scorched dozens of Kithain with his growing Banality. Through trickery and shrewd investment, Lloyd became a wealthy man during the early 1990s; now he uses his money and knowledge of Cymru to destroy the Kithain and all the Glamour they possess. Lloyd is extremely dangerous. In his own evil way, he is extraordinarily clever. He will stop at nothing to inflict his dark vision of Cymru on the fae and their allies.

Lloyd is unaware of the supernatural nature of the Technocracy's activities in Cardiff. He has met Sir Mortimer Evans and a few members of the New World Order. If directly approached by them or by a company like Pentex, Lloyd would gladly sign onto its program, while simultaneously plotting a takeover.

Doom: Black Magician

Court: Unseelie

Legacies: Rake/Regent

House: Dougal

Seeming: Grump

Kith: Nocker

Physical: Strength 3, Dexterity 2, Stamina 3

Social: Charisma 2, Manipulation 4, Appearance 3

Mental: Perception 3, Intelligence 4, Wits 4

Talents: Alertness 3, Brawl 2, Dodge 1, Intimidation 3, Scan 3, Streetwise 2

Skills: Crafts 1, Drive 2, Firearms 1, Leadership 2, Mechanic 1, Stealth 1, Survival 1, Traps 1

Knowledges: Computer 1, Enigmas 1, Law 1, Lore (Faerie) 1, Politics 2, Science 2

Arts: Chicanery 2, Legerdemain 2, Primal 1, Pyretics 1, Wayfare 2

Realms: Actor 2, Fae 3, Nature 2

Stigma: Conversion, Erasure

Backgrounds: Chimera 4, Contacts 2, Resources 4

Glamour: 3

Banality: 7

Willpower: 8

Treasures: Lloyd has a powerful army of nasty chimera he calls the Stone Men. To fae eyes, these creatures are gray, drab animated golems; they serve as Dauntain spies and will occasionally attack any Kithain they encounter.

Image: Lloyd is a slender man with dark hair just beginning to silver. Though he seems large and imposing, he stands well under six feet tall; Lloyd makes up for any lack of height with his imposing attitude. He is cold, calculating and merciless in whatever he does.

Roleplaying Hints: You are a real bastard with no emotions or love for anything but your own twisted visions. No pleas for mercy ever touch your ears, and you'd gladly slay your own child if it meant getting rid of the Kithain and their pansy ways. The time of magic and Glamour is long gone, and your purpose in life is to make sure things stay that way.

The Principality of Guynnt

Nestor Evans

Nestor Evans loves two things in life: people and knowledge. Nestor will talk to anyone, whether mage, vampire, ghost or even Dauntain. As long as he can learn something, he's willing to go to extremes. Next to his mentor, Tom John, Nestor is probably the wisest Kithain in Cymru. Son of a Welsh nurse and an American army officer, the satyr enjoyed a nomadic childhood traveling around the world, learning innumerable languages, tales and songs. Discovering his fae nature while in his early teens thrilled him, and he's danced through life ever since. After a stint in London theatre, he settled down on his late grandfather's old homestead in Trelick, near the Usk River, rebuilding the old place and making it into a guesthouse, bar and freehold for all Kithain.

Court: Seelie

Legacies: Sage/Sophist

Seeming: Grump

Kith: Satyr

Motley: Table of the Twin Rivers

Physical: Strength 3, Dexterity 4, Stamina 4

Social: Charisma 3, Manipulation 3, Appearance 3

Mental: Perception 3, Intelligence 4, Wits 3

Talents: Alertness 3, Athletics 1, Brawl 3, Carousing 3, Dodge 1, Empathy 3, Expression 3, Intrigue 3, Kenning 2, Seduction 3, Streetwise 3, Subterfuge 2

Skills: Brewing 1, Cooking 2, Crafts 2, Dancing 3, Drive 1, Etiquette 2, Firearms 1, Gambling 1, Leadership 1, Melee 2, Security 1, Stealth 1, Storytelling 2, Survival 1

Knowledges: Area Knowledge (Cymru) 3, Enigmas 2, Investigation 2, Linguistics 3, Lore (Fae) 4, Lore (Garou) 3, Lore (Kindred) 1, Lore (Mage) 2, Lore (Wraith) 1, Medicine 2, Mythlore 4, Occult 2, Politics 2

Arts: Chicanery 3, Legerdemain 1, Primal 3, Pyretics 2, Soothsay 2, Sovereign 2, Wayfare 4

Realms: Actor 4, Fae 3, Nature 1, Prop 2, Scene 4

Backgrounds: Contacts 4, Dreamers 2, Gremayne 3, Holdings 2, Mentor 4, Resources 2, Treasures 3

Glamour: 5

Banality: 6

Willpower: 6

Treasures: Over the years, Nestor has collected some valuable goodies, including a bottle of Fianna mead, the Scroll of Bethany ferch Madoc, a tankard of Glenfhada Distilleries whiskey, a vial of vampire blood and a mirror that sometimes (so he believes) shows scenes of Arcadia.

Image: Nestor is a handsome middle-aged man with graceful movements, chestnut brown hair and gentle eyes. As a satyr, he's nicely proportioned and very muscular, with small horns and a short tail. Brown silky fur covers his body except for his shiny black hooves.

Roleplaying Hints: You are a hopeless jolly romantic, a fellow who is happiest not only when he is having a good time but also when others are as well. You especially love women, the way they smell so sweet and move with purpose. Dames, you realize, are your big weakness, but what the hell. You might as well have a great time while you can!



Derwyn ap Allyn

Derwyn is a kindhearted pooka, full of good-natured fun and jest. Although he really likes bamboozling the wrong kind of tourists (the expensive outdoor outfitted types), sending them to rough country in sandals, poking pinholes in their water bottles and so on. He never wishes to cause enduring harm. Derwyn feels a great fondness for his friend Nestor and worries about him living too fast. To this end, Derwyn tries to make things at the Table of the Twin Rivers lively. He also spends time among the pooka in Gwynedd, just to keep up on the latest tricks and jokes. As a mortal, Derwyn Allison works part-time as a firefighter in the Trellick community. But Derwyn is also feeling the approach of old age, and he's powerless to stop it. What he really wants to do is plan one giant final joke before he forgets his fae nature, hoping to center it around the Table of the Twin Rivers if at all possible.

Court: Seelie

Legacies: Bumpkin/Ragamuffin

Seeming: Wilder

Kith: Pooka

Motley: Table of the Twin Rivers, Cwm Pwca

Physical: Strength 3, Dexterity 3, Stamina 3

Social: Charisma 3, Manipulation 3, Appearance 4

Mental: Perception 3, Intelligence 2, Wits 3

Talents: Alertness 3, Athletics 3, Brawl 1, Empathy 1, Kenning 2, Scan 1, Streetwise 2, Subterfuge 3

Skills: Carpentry 1, Crafts 2, Drive 1, Escapology 1, Etiquette 1, First Aid 2, Melee 1, Stealth 4, Survival 3

Knowledges: Area Knowledge (Cymru) 1, Enigmas 1, Linguistics 1, Mythlore 3, Occult 1

Arts: Chicanery 4, Legerdemain 4, Primal 2, Wayfare 5

Realms: Actor 4, Nature 5, Fae 1, Prop 4

Backgrounds: Companion 3, Contacts 2, Mentor 3

Glamour: 7

Banality: 5

Willpower: 7

Image: Derwyn is a small man with reddish hair, a short beard and mustache in human seeming. In his fae appearance, he has very handsome reddish-gray fox-ears and a bushy tail that remains his pride and joy. A continual grin lights his face, and most people find him irresistibly fun.

Roleplaying Hints: Unless something threatens Nestor or your other friends, you are continually cheery and happy. You'll never have the brains of the old satyr, but you possess the wisdom of a good heart and a positive outlook on life. But when something does threaten your contented world, you're more than capable of response in kind. Only fools underestimate a clever pooka.

Mages

*You blocked up my ears,
You plucked out my eyes,
You cut out my tongue,
You fed me with lies.*

— Dead Can Dance, "Song of the Dispossessed"

The mages of Wales neither directly oppose nor assist each other. The Rheibau ferch Llandona in Gwynedd act in unison, but has only passing interest in the Caerleon Linguistics Academy. Likewise, the Harbingers of Avalon work independently from the New World Order, the dominant Convention in Wales. Moreover, the Tradition mages are too caught up in their own work to give much thought to the Technocracy.

The definite wild cards are the Nephandi and the Marauders. Lady Jane Bowden is an unchecked force of destruction; she will gladly annihilate anything that stands in her path to power. Finally, while Jack O'Kent has a reputation for heroism, he is nonetheless volatile and unpredictable. He could easily unleash a dangerous series of backlashes affecting both mages and fae.

Tradition Mages

Dear Sian,

I hope this letter finds you well and happy in your new home. We certainly miss you, but well understand you couldn't miss an opportunity to work in such a lovely area.

What do you think of this new raven? Delivering this letter was his maiden voyage; he's sort of a rogue, so do be sure to let us know if he found you and all. Haven't thought of a clever name for him yet, so if you care to try your hand, be my guest.

I thought long and hard about some of the things you said at the going-away party, about not paying attention to this strange Ascension War and all that. I don't disagree with you entirely, but on the other hand, some information about what's going on couldn't hurt you, at least as far as things go here in Wales. So I've written

up a brief summary of what I personally know about the Traditions in our homeland. It's rather sketchy, I know, but should serve to give you a good start.

As you know from general history, since the end of the Grand Convocation of 1466, nine codified Traditions exist that sprang from ancient roots such as the Seers of Chronos and the Houses of Hermes. The Verbena we follow also count among these nine.

The Akashic Brotherhood and Dreamspeakers have small presence here. And mercifully, so do the Euthanatos. On a theoretical level, I see what these death bearers are seeking, but in a practical sense, I abhor the actions they take, interfering with the natural order.

You know how important chapel is to the average Welshman, so it's a wonder more Celestial Choristers haven't been nagging us. Our historians have discovered some influences from these singers, and I believe a few attend the eisteddfodau on occasion, but none have made contact with us here at Llandona within my lifetime.

Gavin Marius, the father of Llandona, once served the Seers of Chronos who gave birth to the Cult of Ecstasy. The Tradition has changed over the years, and I must admit today's cultists exhaust me. How can anyone possibly learn about life without a pause for breath? I do admire their tenacity, but fear many end up with scorched hearts and minds.

While the Houses of Hermes have dwindled to almost nothing, we Rheibau ferch Llandona respect our ancient shared heritage with House Merinita. Many modern Hermetics possess tremendous power, and as you know, many still come seeking to wed children of our lineage. If they have one flaw, though, it is their hubris, so realize from the start you might be dealing with an obnoxious prig should you choose to contact them.

Stories of weird science and scientists litter the history of Britain, but I know little about the Sons of Ether and the Virtual Adepts. Perhaps some of these mages have found a niche with the growth of technology in south Wales. These Traditions love gadgets and techno-wonders and babble above all else. They are humans out of touch with the natural world...and perhaps out of balance within themselves.

The Romans dubbed our ancestors "Verbena," and while we have other influences at work in our history and culture, we identify most closely with this Tradition. And while we Rheibau ferch Llandona are reluctant to get involved with the Ascension War, I'd gladly do anything I could to aid a Verbena sister or brother in times of need. Blood ties, you see, sometimes overrule matters of the heart and conscience.

My dear girl, I hope my musings will aid you and keep you informed in the coming months. Do not forget that we miss you always and have your old cottage ready whenever you wish to come home.

Much love,
Ashlon

The Technocracy

From Sir Mortimer Evans, Seat of Cardiff, to Lady Victoria Holmes, Seat of Pembroke, All Good Greetings!

Dear lady, what a pleasure and delight it was to have you down for tea last week! I do quite agree that we should make our Ascot plans early this year.

With regards for our plans in the future, I'd like to take a moment and briefly recap the present positions of other groups in the Technocracy as they exist in Wales. Perhaps you could be so good as to add your notes to mine for reference purposes.

Cardiff displays excellent potential for reclamation and development, and as our contacts there report, agents of the New World Order are moving into position to capitalize on the possibilities. My fear, though, is that the New World Order will continue to conduct its "need to know" policy of non-information, cutting us off from crucial knowledge. This is distressing in the extreme. As you know, I do not believe in dissemination of wisdom among the masses and of course we have an ideological imperative to keep the secrets, and to some extent, the existence, of our own order private. But for the sake of commonality and the preservation of unity, I find it deplorable that the New World Order keeps secrets from those of us who deserve to know. We may wish to, shall we say, insinuate ourselves into its activities.

The Harbingers and its agents at Zero Division remain a hidden faction within the Technocracy, and whereas it prefers thuggish street fights and queer experiments, we espouse diplomacy, decorum and civilized autocracy. Only through these means will Britannia once more rule the world. But have I ever mentioned that the seat you hold once belonged to a defector? Your predecessor, one Lady Jane Bowden, had the misfortune to fall in with some distinctly undesirable persons, dabbling in a bizarre occultism I have never encountered. I fear she has fallen into the grasp of something dark and wicked. I accompanied one of the members of Zero Division when he confronted her during the annual Eisteddfod Ball. Dreadful mess! She knew that we suspected her engagement in unnatural activities and was long gone. In her basement were the most disgusting things you could imagine: bottles of blood, weird powders, even a few newts and snakes. It sounds like a horror story, but I can assure you it was quite real.

Iteration X has developed here in Wales quickly and efficiently, maintaining a quiet presence at not only certain universities but within the business community as well. I can likewise see great potential in gadgetry for Zero Division coming from Iteration X. We might do well to cultivate our opportunities with this group

As you know from the statistical reports I sent out last month, our only medical school is at the University of Wales in Bangor. Furthermore, CIA documents note that only one doctor exists per 10,000 people in Wales. I hope you will agree this is not satisfactory, and that we must take steps to remedy the situation. Perhaps you and I might consider endowing a chair for medical studies in the near future. The health-field industry provides an ideal medium of growth for the Progenitors to thrive.

The Syndicate holds the purse strings of the world in its hands. I am sure it monitors our general existence and activities as members of the Technocracy, but I doubt it knows of our higher purpose. And even if it did know, why should it oppose us? We seek to restore the might, majesty and wealth of imperialism, the grandeur of the age of Victoria and Disraeli. Surely it could not ask for more!

I don't need to remind you that exploration, the province of the Void Engineers, has distinct merit. Recall if you will the effects that Raleigh and Drake wrought from their discoveries in the New World. What of the brave journeys of Stanley and Livingstone and other explorers of the Orient and the Dark Continent? Great Britain would not have established such a grand empire had it not been for the visions and wherewithal of great men such as these.

And that, I believe, brings me to a point of closure. Again, I delighted in your visit and hope to see you quite soon. Should you have any questions or need clarification on any points I mentioned, do ring me up.

Most sincerely yours,
Sir Mortimer

Nephandi

Wales is a place of peace and purity, and is most tempting for corrupters. Lady Jane Bowden, owner of the Bron Methlyn bed and breakfast, generally works alone. But she isn't adverse to having help from another barabbi or infernalist. Lady Jane would love to take hold of one of the Rheibau ferch Llandona, bring her into the fold, then send her home to destroy everything Llandona Coven has sought to build. The barabbi also plot on how to expose the existence of the Harbingers of Avalon to the Technocracy at large.

Marauders

Welsh legend has often treated the insane as divinely gifted; thus, Wales has the potential to be a rich haven for Marauders. The stories behind dragons, Cadair Idris, Moel Arthur and Carreg-y-Gwlch may have nothing to do with the Kithain after all...

Llandona Coven Ashlon Rowansong

Nature: Visionary

Demeanor: Architect

Essence: Primordial

Attributes: Strength 2, Dexterity 4, Stamina 3, Charisma 3, Manipulation 4, Appearance 4, Perception 3, Intelligence 3, Wits 3

Abilities: Alertness 2, Awareness 4, Brawl 2, Cosmology 2, Craft 2, Culture 1, Diplomacy 2, Enigmas 3, Herbalism 3, High Ritual 3, Instruction 2, Intuition 2, Leadership 3, Lore (Faerie) 3, Medicine 2, Meditation 2, Melee 1, Occult 3, Research 3, Stealth 2, Subterfuge 1, Survival 2

Backgrounds: Allies 2, Avatar 3, Dream 3, Sanctum 3



Spheres: Correspondence 1, Forces 2, Life 4, Mind 2, Prime 3, Spirit 2, Time 3

Arete: 5

Willpower: 8

Quintessence: 8

Paradox: 1

Background: Ashlon's mother, a Rheibes ferch Llandona, died young; her last wish was that the girl join the Chantry as an apprentice. Ashlon's childhood was a happy one, with time spent among the mages and her father, a tree farmer in northwest Wales. Alone in the forest, only 14 years of age, she underwent a powerful Awakening during a torrential thunderstorm, and instantly understood the delicate ecology existing between sky, sea, land and animals. The Rheibau ferch Llandona gladly welcomed her as a full member of its coven, and since then, Ashlon has served them faithfully as a researcher and counselor.

Image: Blood of the Seers of Chronos, the Wyck, House Merinita and the fae flow through Ashlon's veins, and her beauty and bearing reflect this noble heritage. In her early 40s, she stands tall, willowy and graceful, with dark hair and sapphire-blue eyes. Ashlon's laughter comes easily from the joys she perceives in everyday life, but she also bears a vengeful streak in her heart. Yet, the mage remains patient with the antics of her children, nieces and nephews, rarely displaying her anger. Ashlon wears loose, simple, natural-dyed clothing, some of it handspun, then woven or knitted in her own cottage.

Roleplaying Hints: You are proud without being haughty. Always speak in clear, concise tones and set an example of a life in balance for others to follow. You want to be a seeker of knowledge, but a careful one. You never place yourself above your peers. One goal you have is to re-establish ties with the faeries within your lifetime, and if sharing some information is necessary for that to happen, so be it.

Quote: "We must do anything in our power to renew the ancient alliances with the fair folk."

South Wales Jack O'Kent

Nature: Architect

Demeanor: Fanatic

Essence: Dynamic

Attributes: Strength 3, Dexterity 3, Stamina 4, Charisma 3, Manipulation 2, Appearance 2, Perception 3, Intelligence 3, Wits 4

Abilities: Alertness 2, Athletics 1, Archery 1, Area Knowledge 3 (Wales), Awareness 2, Brawl 1, Climbing 1, Cosmology 1, Disguise 3, Dodge 1, Drive 2, Enigmas 1, Firearms 1, First Aid 1, Hunting 1, Investigation 2, Intuition 1, Lore (Mage) 2, Occult 2, Ride 2, Search 1, Stealth 2, Street-wise 1, Survival 2, Tracking 1

Backgrounds: Allies 2, Arcane 4, Avatar 3, Destiny 3, Dream 2

Spheres: Correspondence 3, Forces 2, Life 2, Mind 1, Prime 1, Time 1

Arete: 5

Willpower: 7

Quintessence: 7

Paradox: 7

Background: Since the mythic age, the name Jack O'Kent has become a legend in southern Wales, a perpetual champion of the weak and powerless. The fact is, Jack O'Kent is not a single individual; a number of people have worn the hereditary mantle of this local hero through the years, passing the name and shik on from generation to generation, presumably choosing a successor when death draws nigh. Historical accounts describe Jack as a mage of somewhat blatant powers; a few say he is a Marauder, accounting for occasional Paradox backlashes during his exploits. Whatever his orientation, Jack is not afraid to use whatever means necessary to save damsels in distress, lost children, farmers about to be kicked off their land, or whatever the people of Wales need him to accomplish. Old stories are told of his battles against de-



mons and spirits. Jack always emerging victorious. However, Jack O'Kent is a definite good guy, never harming the innocent...or even the truly repentant.

Quiet: 3

Image: Jack usually shows up in some sort of fanciful, romantic garb: a clown suit, medieval knight's regalia, pirate trappings, a deerstalker cape, or whatever seems to best suit his purpose. Whether or not Jack is male or female depends on the situation. No one knows his true identity, and those who have tried to learn more have failed.

Roleplaying Hints: You see yourself as the quintessential hero, the white knight in shining armor, the champion of the unfortunate. What's more, you love being a hero in a day and age with few good guys. The Lone Ranger, Sir Galahad, the Equalizer, Superman and many others serve as your role models. In fact, your only worries are maintaining a secret identity and keeping an eye open for a successor. It may be a pretty lonely life, but someone has to live it!

Quote: "Yes, ma'am, I can help you. You say your son's in trouble down in Cardiff? Well, don't worry a bit about it. I'll easily have him back in time for tea!"

Cardiff

SIR MORTIMER EVANS, Harbinger of Avalon, Seat of Cardiff

Nature: Visionary

Demeanor: Traditionalist

Essence: Questing

Attributes: Strength 2, Dexterity 2, Stamina 2, Charisma 3, Manipulation 3, Appearance 2, Perception 3, Intelligence 4, Wits 3

Abilities: Alertness 2, Athletics 1, Awareness 2, Computer 1, Culture 2, Drive 2, Enigmas 1, Etiquette 4, Expression 2, Firearms 2, Instruction 1, Intimidation 2, Law 1, Leadership 2, Linguistics 2, Melee 1, Occult 1, Research 1, Subterfuge 3, Technology 2

Backgrounds: Avatar 2, Contacts 4, Resources 5

Spheres: Correspondence 1, Entropy 1, Forces 2, Mind 1, Time 1

Arete: 3

Willpower: 7

Quintessence: 6

Paradox: 0

Background: Sir Mortimer Evans, British public school boy through and through, grew up in an atmosphere of affluence and power. His father and grandfather built the family's fortune through shipping. Since taking over the reins of the multinational Evans Conglomerate, Sir Mortimer has managed to double the profits and prestige of his forebears. He possesses a staunch pride in Britain and desires nothing more than to create a new Camelot, where the law of the king is absolute and the good of the kingdom is all that matters.

Image: Sir Mortimer is portly and balding, but dresses well and remains a highly respectable member of not only the Cardiff



elite but also his alma mater, Exeter College. He loves to engage in "noble" sporting activities such as deerstalking, cross-country horseback riding and skeet shooting. Always exercising a quiet air of superiority, Evans maintains highly formal behavior around all except his closest friends within the Harbingers, with whom he is quite warm and cordial. One of his favorite pastimes is shopping. He refuses to buy imports, but rather frequents Burberrys for his raincoats, Jaeger for his suits and shirts, John Lobb for his shoes and so on. Sir Mortimer always stays at the Savoy while in London, usually dining at Rules.

Roleplaying Hints: You believe with all your heart that Great Britain is the finest nation in the world. Perhaps the British Empire *has* shrunk somewhat over the years, and perhaps certain members of the Royal Family have gone a bit astray, but these affairs are trivial. What matters to you is the Harbingers are on the edge of creating a mighty new British Empire, with absolute justice, law, order and all things right and proper.

Quote: "I say, it is rather a shame about the passage of the 1963 law allowing peers to renounce their titles. What kind of quirky fellow would ever want to do such a thing?"

Bron Methlyn

Lady Jane Bowden

Nature: Architect

Demeanor: Confidant

Essence: Dynamic

Attributes: Strength 2, Dexterity 3, Stamina 2, Charisma 3, Manipulation 5, Appearance 4, Perception 3, Intelligence 4, Wits 3

Abilities: Alertness 2, Awareness 2, Computer 1, Culture 2, Dancing 1, Drive 1, Etiquette 4, Expression 2, Firearms 2, Herbalism 1, High Enigmas 2, Interrogation 5, Intimidation 3, Intuition 2, Law 1, Linguistics 3, Occult 3, Poisons 2, Research



1, Ride 2, Ritual 2, Seduction 4, Subterfuge 3, Technology 2, Torture 5,
Backgrounds: Allies 2, Arcane 3, Avatar 4, Contacts 3, Resources 5
Spheres: Entropy 2, Forces 2, Life 2, Mind 2, Prime 1
Arete: 4
Willpower: 7
Quintessence: 4
Paradox: 2

Background: Lady Jane grew up bored and spoiled. Packed off to boarding school at age six, she would have no doubt grown up to be just like her useless parents, except that she attracted the attention of the headmaster when she turned 13. At first, their affair was simple; then he revealed his dabbling in the occult. Lady Jane was fascinated. Here was a chance to explore the real wielding of power. It so different from the hollow trappings of her parents. She became an acolyte in the headmaster's infernalist cult, then Awakened during her first blood sacrifice. She rose to leadership in the cult, simultaneously leading a double life as a dilettante. At a spring society ball, Lady Jane met Sir Mortimer Evans, who recruited her into the Harbingers of Avalon. Needless to say, he had no idea she was a barabbi. After she was exposed, Lady Jane drew on hidden funds to establish a new identity. She aches to betray the Harbingers to Tradition mages or zealots within the Technocracy; at this point, Lady Jane is just waiting for the right time to pounce.

Image: In her early 20s, Lady Jane is exquisitely beautiful. She is 5'6" tall with long, honey-colored hair and warm brown eyes. Her clothes are simple and elegant: black dresses, flowing skirts, tailored blazers and shapely pumps. When engaging in her nastier activities, Lady Jane wears form-fitted black leather or nothing at all.

Roleplaying Hints: You act like the perfect young English noblewoman, with perfect enunciation and charming manners. Inside, you seethe with corruption; you are a mass of foulness that wants to destroy and maim everything around you.

Quote: "I say, I've already removed most of your flesh, so do think carefully about my request. Else, I shall have to start being rather mean about this whole business."

Other Beings in Cymru

*The gleam of blood and a charge
 in the steep eye,
 it trembles above an acre of wheat
 and then swings away
 to where the sky meets memory.*

— Dewi Stephen Jones, *Y Glorian* (The Balance)

Vampires

Wales has long been a favored haven of Clan Gangrel, since the wilderness affords good hiding and both the cities and towns offer prosperous hunting. Notable Welsh Kindred include Art Morgan and Prince Rhun of Tintagel (see **DC by Night**). Other clans shun this uncivilized region of Britain, though the occasional Toreador might enjoy the clubs, museums and spa resorts.

Werewolves

The Dryn a drowd yn flaidd are the Welsh branch of the Fianna, closely allied to the pro-British Brotherhood of Herne. Most Fianna consider these Welsh cousins bizarre and perhaps too intertwined with the fae for their own good (see **Fianna Tribebook**). Occasional skirmishes break out between Irish and Welsh Fianna over wars long forgotten.

Wraiths

Welsh legends abound with stories of the restless dead. Among these are tales of the White Lady of Bro Gynin, a beautiful woman who looks for true and faithful pairs of lovers to reward with treasures. Mysterious blue lights near the town of Ruthin also inspire the wonder of uneasy spirits. Whether from death in battle or ancient evil ritual, the dead seem to wander all over Wales.

Fomori

With the growth of new industry, Wales may become a quiet breeding ground for the Fomori. One Fomori already has an establishment near Swansea, and he will no doubt extend his influence as he grows in power. Cardiff and Newport seem ideal for Pentex expansion, especially if the corporation capitalizes on the Dauntain and Technocracy influences already in place.



Appendix

Bibliography

The Chronicles of Narnia, C.S. Lewis
Let's Go! Britain and Ireland
The Berkeley Guides: Great Britain and Ireland on the Loose
The Intelligent Travelers Guide to Britain
The Encyclopedia of Fairies
Fairies, Brian Froud and Alan Lee
Albion: A Guide to Legendary Britain, Jennifer Westwood
The Books of Magic, Neil Gaiman
Practical Celtic Magic, Murray Hope
Power of Raven, Wisdom of Serpent: Celtic Women's Spirituality, Noragh Jones

Recommended Music

The music of Steeleye Span, Fairport Convention, Jethro Tull, Silly Wizard and Loreena McKennett all blend old tales and tunes with a modern air that captures the spirit of the **Isle of the Mighty**. Of course, depending on the tone of your chronicle, the Cure, the Sex Pistols, the Beatles, Benjamin Britten, or Andrew Lloyd Weber may be more appropriate. Whatever mood you want to capture, chances are someone from England has written music about it!

Recommended Sources for Wales

Anyone wanting to run a chronicle set in Wales should obtain some sort of illustrated travel guide or coffee-table picture book, for mere words cannot do the haunting beauty of this land justice. For inspirational reading, try Susan Cooper's *The Dark is Rising* series. Only the last two books, *The Grey King* and *Silver on the Tree*, take place in Wales proper, but the entire series revolves around themes of magic, questing and personal sacrifice. Likewise, Lloyd Alexander's *Prydain* series is a marvelous use of "mythical" Wales as a backdrop for epic adventures.

The traditional source of Welsh myth and legend is *The Mabinogion*; numerous translations are available. Evangeline Walton has written an exciting modern rendition of these tales in four books, beginning with *Prince of Annwn*.

Wales also has excellent representation on the World Wide Web. Useful sites include www.data-wales.co.uk/index.html, www.compulink.co.uk/~kovcomp/anglesey.html, www.data-wales.co.uk/wstats.html and www.arachnid.cs.cf.ac.uk/Places/wales.html.

Many large cities, such as New York or Atlanta, have branches of the British Tourist Authority. This company will gladly send out maps and colorful brochures about Wales for a minimal postage charge.

Films about Wales are hard to find. One notable exception is Katherine Hepburn's *The Corn is Green*, a poignant look at the effects of the mining industry on the quality of life in late 19th-century Wales. *How Green Was My Valley* has some breathtaking scenery. An excellent recent film is *The Englishman Who Went Up a Hill and Came Down a Mountain*. Educational cable channels also show frequent historical documentaries and travel footage of Wales.

Recommended Sources for Scotland

Anyone planning a story for Caledonia needs a good guidebook. Fodor's guides are good, but are also a bit sterile. Try the smaller, independent guidebooks, such as *Scotland: the Rough Guide*. Guidebooks of this ilk have a bit more character than the "name brands." The storyteller may also want to pick up a Gaelic dictionary, or download the texts from the Elementary Course of Gaelic WWW page listed below.

There are a lot of other resources to kindle tales of Scotland. Recent years have seen a wealth of movies

about Scotland: *Rob Roy*, *Braveheart*, and *Trainspotting* are all must-sees. If possible, go to one of the Highland Games held all over the country (and the world), or find a local Celtic band and plan an evening around hearing some live music. (It beats a CD cold!) Finally, you should read Robert Burns and Robert Louis Stevenson, but also take a look at some of the living Scottish poets: Sorley Maclean, Ian Crichton Smith, Tessa Ransford, Aonghas MacNeacail, Maureen Macnaughton, Robert Crawford, and Elizabeth Burns.

The web also offers a wealth of information on Scotland and its culture. The top web pages I found are: **BUBL Information Services Scottish Text Archive:** 2nd-cs.dcs.st-andrews.ac.uk/~wdw/Afalonrhithwir.html; **Edinburgh College:** <http://www.geo.ed.ac.uk/home/scotland/scotland.html>; **Elementary Course of Gaelic:** <http://www.smo.uhi.ac.uk/gaidhlig/ionnsachadh/ECG/>; **Glasgow Herald:** <http://leapfrog.almac.co.uk>; **National Museum of Scotland Homepage:** <http://www.nms.ac.uk/>; **Online Scotland:** <http://www.ibmpcug.co.uk/~ecs/index.html>; **Stirling College's Homepage:** <http://www.stir.ac.uk/>; and **The Bagpipe Web:** <http://pipes.tico.com/pipes/pipes.html>



Ghille Dhu

(yeel-.du)

At one time the ghille dhu lived, thrived, sickened and died in pace with the seasons. In spring they awoke from their graves as babes of the glade and forest. With the warmth of summer they grew strong and their strength rivaled even that of the trolls. In autumn they became aged, but learned, and nurturing. As their bodies became frail and weak with the coming of winter, they grew wise, teaching other creatures about the promise of rebirth before they entered their barrows and said their good-byes. Each incarnation was different, but the ghille dhu seemed everlasting.

After the Sundering, their seasonal cycle of life and death began to slowly falter some ghille dhu began to live as babes until winter, others were often born out of the grave as mature adults. Many of the ghille dhu went mad. Some sought out the final death of iron, convinced of their own corruption. With the Shattering, a desperate followed the example of many other commoners and took on mortal coils, in a vain attempt to save themselves and re-connect with nature.

Few ghille dhu have survived; many are hopelessly insane and have forgotten their lesson of life, death and rebirth. Ghille dhu pay a much heavier price for incurring Banality than do other fae. Each descent into Banality sends one into a new, older seeming. They have very short lifetimes, harkening back to their pre-Sundering existence.

The ghille dhu are perhaps the most tragic of all changelings. They are a people who have become disconnected from that which they once were and still desperately seek to cling to what they have lost. Some ghille dhu have returned to protecting the sacred groves and magical place, but most are content to live out their brief lives by simply existing. Some few will occasionally be found in the company of other changelings, especially if the changelings are dedicated to goal similar to that of the ghille dhu's (like protecting a sacred grove).

Each change in seeming is dramatic, even for a fae. Their Birthrights and Affinities change along with their appearance.

Appearance

All ghille dhu are green skinned but as they age, the hue changes from an almost neon green in Spring, to medium green in the Summer of the lives. In Autumn their wrinkled flesh turns to the deep green of a pine needle. Their hair is of various colors, but is always gray to white in Autumn. Their fae seemings are always adorned with plants related to their seeming: Flowers in Spring, Vines and grasses in Summer, and Multicolored leaves and mosses in Autumn. Their bodies resemble cherubic babes in Spring, stunningly beautiful hardbodies in Summer and gnarled and wizened elders in Autumn.

Seemings

Spring ghille dhu are playful and inquisitive; their pudgy bodies are bursting with life and energy. They rejoice in playing in wild places. They have horrible tendencies to climb into places they cannot get down from or stay out way past their bedtimes.

Summer ghille dhu combine the beauty of a thick field of corn with the looks of a centerfold satyr-bait. Luckily, they possess the strength to hang the goats from the trees when the ghille dhu have had their fill.

Autumn ghille dhu are wizened and thoughtful. Their brows bend with the thought of their upcoming winter and the need to get their tasks completed before their time is through.

Lifestyles:

Most ghille dhu are connected to the land in some manner even in the mortal seeming. They are farmers, reclusive artisans, game wardens, hermits, and fishermen.



They avoid cities, and professions which would take them there for long periods of time. Ghille dhu who enter their Chrysalis in cities often burn out within a few short months or years. Their rapid shift of seemings as they fall to the Winter's Kiss, and the changes in character that this brings, often earn them a one-way ticket to a mental ward.

Affinity:

Nature

☾ BIRTHRIGHTS:

All Seemings

- **Nature's Bounty** — Ghille dhu may harvest Glamour from nature just as Nunnehi (page 146, **Players Guide**).

Spring Only

- **Spin the Wheel** — Young ghille dhu can reroll any one roll, without spending a Willpower point, once per Story.

Summer only

- **Rose and Oak** — The ghille dhu are not only beautiful but strong. They gain a dot of Appearance and Strength, even if this takes them above five. This Birthright is effective in both the character's mortal seeming and fae mien.

Autumn

- **Wisdom of the Ages** — Old ghille dhu have a mystic contact with the Dreaming and its cycles. Once per Story, a ghille dhu may meditate upon a question concerning the fae. This must be done in a natural spot, such as a place they might be able to harvest Glamour. (Not in a potted plant in a mall!) A successful Willpower roll nets them an answer from the Dreaming. A simple yes/no question is difficulty 7, more difficult questions have higher difficulties. A botch means that no more answers will be given on that subject, no matter how cleverly worded. This ability can generally be used once per lunar cycle. The difficulty increases by one for each additional use. Using this ability to excess is said to be extremely dangerous and has resulted in the sudden disappearance of the ghille dhu who defy this tradition.



Frailties:

- **The Kiss of Winter** — Ghille dhu who suffer a Chimerical Death automatically age to the next seeming. Additionally every time the character gains a permanent point of Banality the character must succeed in a Glamour roll (difficulty equal to his current Banality rating) or pass into the next seeming. This rapid aging only affects the character's fae mien, not his mortal seeming. If the changeling's seeming is already Autumn, the fae mien dies. There is no chance of recovery for the ghille dhu. The fae spirit is gone until reborn in another body.

Quote:

"You talk of being caught on the wheel of life, like some dog's carcass caught on the wheel of your car. When will you understand? How many times must I show you with my death? We are the wheel. Look. Be. Learn!"

Outlook

- **Boggans** — Wiser than the other take them for, but too concerned with things.
- **Eshu** — Wise, but unfocused.
- **Nockers** — Simple, if loud. They suffer from the same malady as the boggans.
- **Pooka** — Our spring, embodied.
- **Redcaps** — The beast is part of life too.
- **Satyr**s — Too concerned with the spring and summer of life.
- **Selkies** — Imps of the sea, they have the bond with nature that we cannot remember.
- **Sidhe** — The best often fall far.
- **Sluagh** — In the darkness of their holes, do their secrets fulfill them?
- **Trolls** — They are what the sidhe have forgotten.



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